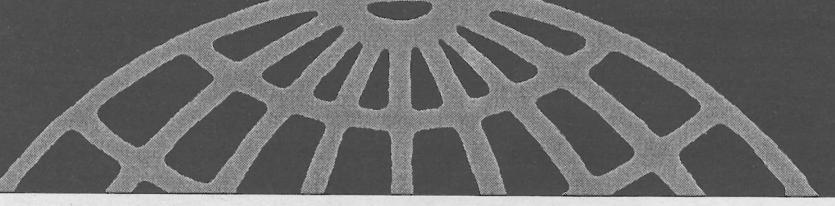


Industrial Worker



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May 2003

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Oakland police shoot war protesters

"APL and SSA, how many kids have you killed today?" hundreds of demonstrators chanted April 7th, as they picketed the APL terminal in Oakland. Police responded by opening fire with rubber bullets, wooden blocks, concussion grenades, and other "non-lethal" projectiles that sent several picketers to the hospital.

More than 700 demonstrators turned out in the predawn hours, closing two of the port's 10 terminals in a lively picket line that included brass bands and delegations from several unions, including the IWW.

APL, the former American Presidential Lines, is a major military contractor (it did \$56.8 million in DoD business last year) which has furnished nine container ships to the U.S. Department of Defense for the war on Iraq. Picketers also criticized another Port of Oakland tenant, Stevedoring Services of America, which has been awarded a military contract to run the Iraqi port of Umm Qasr. SSA was also a major force behind the recent lock-out of West Coast dock workers.

Police arrested 31 picketers by police during the protest. The same day New York City police arrested several activists blocking the entrance to the Manhattan building of the Carlyle Group, a firm with a stake in the defense industry.

After longshoremen refused to cross the Oakland picket line, police ordered picketers to disperse. Minutes later they opened fire, injuring dozens of protesters and several longshoremen who were standing nearby. Nine longshoremen were injured and five were hospitalized. Dozens of picketers also suffered serious injuries.

The longshoremen were standing near one of the terminal gates, waiting for an arbitrator to rule on whether they would be required to cross the picket line.

When ILWU Local 10 business agent Jack Heyman informed police that ILWU members had been shot and that he was going to instruct all ILWU members to leave the area, he was dragged from his car, thrown onto the pavement, handcuffed and then sent to jail, where he was held for 14 hours.

Trent Willis, a business agent for the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, said angrily that dockworkers were leaving the docks after the incident.

"They shot my guys. We're not going to work today," Willis said. "The cops had no reason to open up on them."

"I've been on plenty of picket lines and this was as peaceful as any I've been on," said Laborers union member Charles Minster. "This was organized by Direct Action Against the War in an attempt to bring the message to America that the corporations are getting rich as the bombs, soldiers and civilians fall in Iraq. When such a line is dispersed in the manner it was today you can only assume that Corporate America is ruling the docks and the country for their benefit and look out world."

"No one was doing anything threatening," said Scott Fleming, 29, an Oakland lawyer who had three bruises on his back and one on a leg. "They just leveled their guns and started firing."

Several unions around the world have protested the brutal assault. Local union officials attended a meeting of the Oakland City Council to demand an official investigation and action against the police. A hearing has been set for April 29.

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It's workers acting
together to defend
our interests

Oregon's pro-boss farm labor bill

PCUN protests farm
labor legislation only
a boss could love

Millions strike against Iraq war

Symbolic strikes can't
block movement of
troops & munitions

5 6 9

Will we lose the 8-hour day?

**Congress considers 80-hour weeks
while Labor Dept. guts overtime rules**

BY JON BEKKEN

The Bush administration proposed new regulations March 27 that would deny overtime pay protections to millions of U.S. workers. The proposed rules would enable employers to reclassify many workers as managers, administrative or professional employees – categories exempted from FLSA protections including the requirement to pay time and a half for work after 40 hours.

Meanwhile, a House subcommittee has approved legislation that would enable employers to replace overtime pay with compensatory time off (at the employers' convenience, of course). HR 1119 is now headed to the full Education and Workforce Committee. The Senate is considering a parallel bill, S. 317, which would also replace the current 40 hour standard with an 80-hour two week standard.

The Department of Labor's press release avoids the real issues to claim that it is extending overtime protection to 1.3 million "managers" and other salaried personnel currently excluded from overtime protection because they make more than \$155 a week – a standard set 30 years ago.

This change (the government proposes raising the salary threshold to \$425 a week) would make it clear that some fast food assistant managers are covered by overtime; but in fact, most are already covered since "managers" spending more than 20 percent of their work time on non-managerial duties are now entitled to overtime pay. (Of course, employers routinely misclassify workers as managers or professionals in an attempt to evade overtime and other labor protections.)

In exchange, the rules would eliminate overtime protection for possibly millions of workers who could be reclassified as professional or administrative employees. Current

rules define "professional" workers' jobs as predominantly creative or intellectual, requiring advanced training, or involving creativity, invention and independent judgement. Under the proposed rules, workers who hold a "position of responsibility" or have learned specialized job skills through on-the-job training or a trade school would be exempt from overtime protection.

The proposed rules were published in the *Federal Register* and posted on the Labor Department web site (www.dol.gov) for public comments, which are due by June 30. After reviewing the comments, the department can revise the regulations or simply adopt them.

The department says the new rules would "modernize" obsolete regulations and make it easier for employers to know if workers were exempt. A few years ago, a pro-boss research group estimated that employers were violating overtime law to the tune of \$19 billion a year. Employers complain that lawsuits have successfully challenged the misclassification of employees as exempt, forcing them to pay overtime and damages, and that many production jobs now require advanced technical skills. The Labor Department proposed to address these complaints with regulations that would eliminate overtime protection for millions of workers.

While the legislative history of the Fair Labor Standards Act makes it clear that the intent was to cover all except a handful of executives and professionals (such as doctors and lawyers), the new regulations would presume that any salaried job requiring a two-year college degree or specialized technical skills is exempt so long as it pays at least \$425 a week. However, the explanation of the proposed regulations published in the *Federal Register* makes it clear that the pri-

continued on page 8

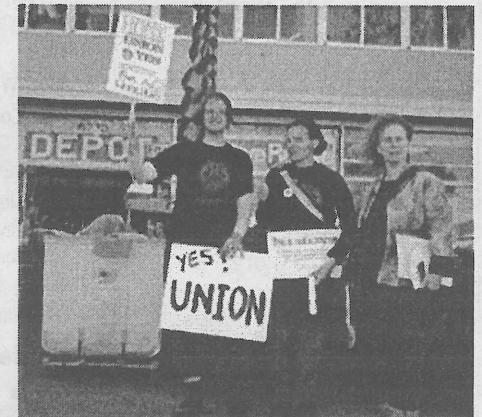
Joining the IWW to gain respect on the job

The San Francisco Bay IWW is demanding union recognition at two jobs – the East Bay Depot for Creative Reuse, and Stonemountain and Daughter Fabrics in Berkeley.

Stonemountain relies on the expertise of its staff to help customers with its specialized fabrics, but its workers are not treated with respect. They are demanding a grievance procedure, equitable pay rates and scheduling, access to benefits, job descriptions, and regular staff meetings. Workers are currently seeking voluntary recognition.

At the East Bay Depot for Creative Reuse, workers are organizing to reestablish the spirit of teamwork and cooperation upon which the Depot was founded. Founded 28 years ago as a resource center where artists, teachers and the community could make recycled art supplies available at low cost, the Depot has since grown to include arts, education and outreach programs in addition to a thrift store.

Recently, the board of directors has turned to outside management, cut off workers' input, and slashed pay and benefits. After months of trying to resolve these issues, several longtime workers quit, while those remaining decided to unionize – an NLRB



election is pending. Sixty people joined workers in a rally outside the Depot April 13 to support the workers' efforts.

Workers have been leafleting to alert customers to the issues. Workers have raised several demands, including the right to receive their paychecks on time (and without being asked to give the money back), a grievance procedure, restructuring of the board of directors to better represent the community, regular staff meetings, training in identifying and working with toxic materials, compliance with occupational safety laws, health benefits, and wage equity.

News Item: Sandstorms

U.S. and allied ground forces' drive to Baghdad has been halted by massive sandstorms. Mr. Bush you have massive resources of money that you have extorted from the people. You have a huge military in which you have convinced common people to kill the common people of other lands. You have weapons of mass death.

You can terrorize people of complete countries with bombs dropped from above. You have your local thugs beat up and terrorize people who speak against your ways. You can threaten all people of the world with the Bush doctrine of either we side with your domination or you will view us as your enemy and treat us as you please.

But there is one thing you overlooked Mr. Bush, Mother Earth can still kick your ass! Shall you, Mr. Bush, declare Mother Earth a terrorist? Shall you order your Homeland Security to spy on and try to arrest Mother Earth? Shall you ask your congress for a declaration of war against Mother Earth? Shall you order your military to fight in combat against Mother Earth?

It don't matter one bit what you do, Mr. Bush, it don't matter how much money you spend or how many grandiose threats you make, Mr. Bush, Mother Earth can still kick your ass!

In The Spirit Of Total Resistance
Arthur J. Miller

Hypocrites

They tell us they are protecting us from "terrorists," and then they lay off the people who watch airports!

The March 28 *Wall Street Journal* reports that up to 3,000 airport screeners (more than 5 percent of the total) could lose their jobs this month, with another 3,000 job cuts in

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The Voice of Revolutionary Industrial Unionism

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- ★ EDUCATION
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the works over the next 18 months.

Transportation Security Administration head James Loy also has refused the screeners the right to union representation.

— Robert G. Rice II

A hero to workers

I was enjoying the IW's good coverage of Latin American labor movements until I came across "Venezuela: Why the General Strike and Regime Change don't fit" in the latest issue.

FW Moore's analysis of the Venezuelan situation is as flawed as it is rigid. He makes it perfectly clear that he is a doctrinaire syndicalist, but little else of use can be gleaned from the lecturing he gives to Venezuelan workers.

To his credit, FW Moore recognizes that the corrupt Venezuelan business unions acted as pawns for the Bush administration. High level meetings between the generals and union officials and US government operatives were frequent before and during both "general strikes." But the issues of imperialism and self-determination are central to a complete understanding of the "strikes."

Chavez and the massive people's movement that brought him to power are a much more serious threat to FTAA/ALCA, foreign expropriation of labor and resources, and US anti-worker terrorism as practiced across the border in Colombia than they are to strong labor organizations in Venezuela. As in the capitalist press, FW Moore has mischaracterized as tyrannical Chavez's legal reforms, which grant much more effective political power to the previously under-represented working class.

The Venezuelan government's land reform policies and health and education reforms give workers a much more stable base from which to confront their bosses and change Venezuelan society.

In regards to the strike, reports from independent journalists in Caracas and other parts of Venezuela which I have read indicate that the "general strike" never spread far beyond the oil industry in Caracas, un-

less workers were locked out by bosses sympathetic to the imperialist cause.

Reports indicate that in the oil industry, the only "workers" who frequently were replaced by the police force with scabs were the ship captains, with the crew assisting the effort. Chavez is a hero to workers across Latin America for standing up to Bush and winning. The Bolivarian movement has inspired many working-class advances, some of which FW Moore might view as ideologically correct. I hope that prospective members or coalition partners in Providence who are familiar with Venezuelan politics won't be turned off by this month's *Industrial Worker*.

— Alex Gould, IU 640

Editor's Note: This letter (which was not actually submitted for publication, but instead was circulated on the Internet) seriously misrepresents FW Moore's article, which evidently pointed out too many uncomfortable truths about the Chavez regime's authoritarian approach and its attempt to create a "labor movement" subordinated to the government.

Many Venezuelan workers reject this false choice between the Chavez regime and their bosses, demanding the right to form their own organizations free of interference from the government and the bosses. Trusting to military "heroes" like Chavez to defend our rights is a strategy that has never served the working class well — let alone secured our emancipation.

Declaration on the U.S. invasion of Iraq

We, the Industrial Workers of the World, believe that an armed invasion of Iraq is unjustified, reckless, and self-interested, and we urge working people to obstruct this war by withholding their labor.

We observe that the Bush administration is renewing the attacks on Iraq which have continued unabated since 1991, bringing death to over one million Iraqis. This renewed attack is contrary to the opinions of U.S. citizens and the international community. The war endangers the entire human population of the Earth as well as the natural environment.

We observe that the U.S. government never represents the interests of the working people of the United States, but only the interests of a tiny minority who control nearly all of that country's wealth; that with this war, the Bush administration acts to gain profit for its client corporations, and seeks to divert public attention away from its own corruption.

We express both sympathy and solidarity with the working people of Iraq who, like the working people of the United States, are tormented by brutal and power-drunk regimes in their own countries.

We urge working men and women in Iraq, the United States, and in all countries, to organize and strike, or to redirect their labor in any way that will impede the war effort. We urge military personnel to recognize that they, too, are working people, who are being ordered to kill and maim their fellow workers.

Only when working people from around the world come together, recognize our common bonds and common masters, and lay down our tools and arms, will the twin yokes of militarism and capitalism be thrown off our shoulders, and the workers of the world will live in peace with each other and in harmony with the earth.

All wars are bosses' wars

General Executive Board
Industrial Workers of the World

Readers' Soapbox

I was enjoying the IW's good coverage of Latin American labor movements until I came across "Venezuela: Why the General Strike and Regime Change don't fit" in the latest issue.

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May Day 2003

The First of May is a traditional time to celebrate the return of Spring to the northern hemisphere and the natural solidarity of workers around the world.

This year, however, the mood of workers is considerably subdued. As workers gather to celebrate the international workers' holiday, we look upon a world becoming more and more unstable. From the invasion of Iraq, to the economic crisis, to continuing attacks upon working class organizations and living conditions, everywhere there is war – against workers.

Understanding Our Strength

Before the invasion of Iraq began, several unions, most notably in Italy and the United Kingdom, made efforts to use their power as workers to stop the transport of war materials. As an IWW poet said years ago, "Without our brain and muscle not a single wheel can turn." The ruling class – international capitalism – needs us to do its bidding. When we organize and refuse its orders, we can start to define an alternative to the "New World Order."

Organization Needed

The scattered demonstrations and isolated local acts of rebellion will not be enough to defeat our well-organized opponents. The expression of moral or political outrage may have passing influence, but in the long term has little effect. In fact, the ruling class needs riots and violent demonstrations, using them as an excuse for funding repressive police forces and further restricting our rights.

In order to fight a well-organized, highly centralized enemy, we need to transform spontaneous mass protests into reliable, democratic organizations of mutual aid and support. These structures need to emphasize the working class strengths – solidarity, economic power, and internationalism.

General Executive Board, Industrial Workers of the World

Around Our Union

Workers at DARE Family Services in Boston voted unanimously for IWW representation in an NLRB election for which ballots were counted March 31. Wobs are now pressing management to begin negotiations.

GEB member Patrick McGuire went to Thunder Bay, Ontario, last month for a weekend of agitating, organizing and performing. While there, he spoke on "Revolutionary Industrial Unionism: Why workers still need fightin' unions" to an audience of 50 people and was part of a panel entitled "Know Your Rights." He and FW Garth Hardy also played IWW songs on the campus radio station and

in front of the Finnish Co-op Restaurant (in an old IWW hall). Efforts to establish a branch in Thunder Bay are well underway.

Picketing continues at Stella's cafe in Winnipeg, leading up to a Labour Board hearing over the firing of IWW member John Stillwell earlier this year for organizing.

Workers at Revolt, a computer services collective in Portland, Oregon, now display an IWW shop card.

Library student employees at Reed College in Portland demanded union recognition March 24 after months of fruitless efforts to address grievances arising out of the elimination of one-third of staff slots. True to form, administrators suggested more talks. A deadline for voluntary recognition is approaching as we go to press.

Preamble to the IWW Constitution

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life.

Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the means of production, abolish the wage system, and live in harmony with the earth.

We find that the centering of the management of industries into fewer and fewer hands makes the trade unions unable to cope with the ever-growing power of the employing class. The trade unions foster a state of affairs which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby helping defeat one another in wage wars. Moreover, the trade unions aid the employing class to mislead the workers into the belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers.

These conditions can be changed and the interest of the working class upheld only by an organization formed in such a way that all its members in any one industry, or all industries if necessary, cease work whenever a strike or lockout is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one an injury to all.

Instead of the conservative motto, "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work," we must inscribe on our banner the revolutionary watchword, "Abolition of the wage system."

It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism. The army of production must be organized, not only for the everyday struggle with capitalists, but also to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown. By organizing industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.

Hull: Protesting the war on Iraq

IWW members in Hull led the way in an anti-war protest on the evening of March 20th, when they organised a peaceful but effective direct action against the war. Wobblies led a blockade of the main artery that runs through Hull to the docks, a main route for imports and exports to Europe.

A local member praised the "great solidarity of ordinary people united in their defiance of state rule and the media war being waged upon them here at home, while the bombs rain down on Iraq."

Describing the action, he said that "we overwhelmed the ineffectual police lines to block rush-hour traffic in both directions for nearly two hours. The protest was made up of local residents, college students (who had been protesting from early morning throughout the city), and the usual suspects from the left and other sympathetic activist

organisations."

"Fifteen IWW members from Hull took control of the demo out of the hands of the paper sellers of the SWP and Socialist Party, by leading the march to take the vital economic route that runs through Hull. It was the best signal we felt we could send out, and symbolic of the power that ordinary people have to bring any economy to a grinding halt if they see fit, simply by standing together and linking arms in solidarity."

IWW members have also been active elsewhere in adding our voices to those protesting, both in the UK and around the world.

Normally opposition becomes a lot quieter with the commencement of hostilities, but the day war began was a historic event in more ways than one, for never before have the UK and US governments faced so much open opposition on entering a war.

UK Wobs fight "Agenda for Change"

A new issue of the *IWW Health Worker* has been issued, continuing the British IWW's campaign against the "Agenda for Change" deal negotiated by National Health Service trade unions.

The deal would give staff just 16% over four years – well behind increases in the cost of living. Many staff including speech and language therapists, radiographers and occupational therapists would see their work week increase. 'Modernisation' would mean harder work and more unsocial hours.

Overtime rates for Sundays would be cut from double-time to time and a half. Instead of seniority-based pay scales, pay progression would be set by managers' performance appraisals.

The list goes on and on. No wonder that *IWW Healthworker* has been contacted by numerous healthworkers angry with the deal. Here are some of their comments:

"We have been waiting four years for this. What a waste of time! It gives us nothing." – NHS physiotherapist.

"My union has negotiated a pay cut for me. My trust can't recruit electricians for love or money. Agenda for Change is going to make things ten times worse." – Amicus-AEEU member.

Health workers are hacked off with poor pay, poor working conditions and long hours. They are leaving in droves. The government has had to entice over 60,000 nurses from developing countries just to keep the service going.

Labour is vulnerable. If health workers stood up and said no to Agenda for Change the government would be forced to listen. They would have no choice.

Unfortunately unions like the RCN and Unison are in the government's pockets. Beverly Malone, RCN general secretary has gone as far as praised Agenda for Change.

It is time to start fighting back. What health workers need is a union that will tell it straight, that has their interests at heart. The IWW is that union, for only the IWW says: "Vote No To Agenda for Change!"

Join the IWW Today

The IWW is a union for all workers, a union dedicated to organizing on the job, in our industries and in our communities both to win better conditions today and to build a world without bosses, a world in which production and distribution are organized by workers ourselves to meet the needs of the entire population, not merely a handful of exploiters.

We are the Industrial Workers of the World because we organize industrially – that is to say, we organize all workers on the job into one union, rather than dividing workers by trade, so that we can pool our strength to fight the bosses together.

Since the IWW was founded in 1905, we have recognized the need to build a truly international union movement in order to confront the global power of the bosses and in order to strengthen workers' ability to stand in solidarity with our fellow workers no matter what part of the globe they happen to live on.

We are a union open to all workers, whether or not the IWW happens to have representation rights in your workplace. We organize the worker, not the job, recognizing that unionism is not about government certification or employer recognition but about workers coming together to address our common concerns. Sometimes this means striking or signing a contract. Sometimes it means refusing to work with an unsafe machine or following the bosses' orders so literally that nothing gets done. Sometimes it means agitating around particular issues or grievances in a specific workplace, or across an industry.

Because the IWW is a democratic, member-run union, decisions about what issues to address and what tactics to pursue are made by the workers directly involved.

TO JOIN: Mail this form with a check or money order for initiation and your first month's dues to: IWW, Post Office Box 13476, Philadelphia, PA 19101.

Initiation is the same as one month's dues. Our dues are calculated according to your income. If your monthly income is under \$1,000, dues are \$6 a month. If your monthly income is between \$1,000 - \$2,000, dues are \$12 a month. If your monthly income is over \$2,000 a month, dues are \$18 a month.

- I affirm that I am a worker, and that I am not an employer
- I agree to abide by the IWW constitution
- I will study its principles and make myself acquainted with its purposes.

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Praise Boss

by F. N. Brill

The title of this column comes from the song "Wobbly Doxology," a line of which goes, "Praise Boss whose wars we love to fight." Usually this column is meant to poke fun at the rich and the foibles of the ruling class.

Given the Iraqi war I find that it is difficult to make light even with the ample ammunition the hypocrisy of capitalist war 'news' gives me. Where would I start? The *Guardian* (UK) newspaper recently was given proof that Margaret Thatcher's government built the chemical weapons plants of Saddam Hussein. U.S. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld met with Hussein just previous to the chemical weapons bombing of Halabja. The 'Kurds' bombed by Hussein in the 1980s were workers – both Kurd and Arab – in insurrection. And that's just the beginning of the lengthy list of deception, lies and the mangling of the facts.

But you already know that, right?

I want to ask, why did we lose another battle? Why did we – the workers – buy into another war? Killing workers of another country while they kill us? What does one do to stop war? Rally once a week till there's no one else rallying? March around in circles? Do acts of minor vandalism? Block street corners?

This column is only one Wobbly's opinion. But I think we need to have this discussion not only within the IWW but also within the wider radical labour movement. In Portland, Wobblies held a meeting on building a working class anti-war movement. I would like to relate some of the discussion from that workshop and expand on it as well.

It is the IWW's belief that by folding our arms – by stopping work – workers can halt most any ruling class action, including the functioning of capitalism itself. Our power lies in our level of organization and ability to act jointly – industrially. Society doesn't run without our consent. The power isn't with the ruling class' weapons and money, true social power is literally in your and my hands.

The are numerous accounts of the IWW conducting actions against war using working class strengths. IWW dock workers often prevented the loading of munitions ships bound to fight against the Russian Revolution. Even when we had little industrial power we tried to use it in effective ways. In 1937, IWW sailors refused to sail a boatload of munitions from Baltimore, bound for Franco's troops in Spain. The ship eventually sailed, the crew being sailors from the Communist-led, 'left-wing' CIO union the NMU.

The IWW is also credited with effectively stopping the Australian war effort during World War One. We did this through massive efforts to reach out to the Australian working class and discuss why it was not in their interests to participate. Our efforts undermined confidence in the pro-war Labor Government, which called a referendum on conscription. The government was twice defeated at the ballot box, conscription ended and the Australian war machine ground to a halt. True, the IWW doesn't believe that the ballot box is something to place trust in, that's why we built the working class consensus against the war. The war effort ended because the working class refused – in life and at the ballot box – to go along.

★★★

One of the major mistakes we make in fighting against capitalist war is forgetting about the one "war" worth fighting – the class war. War means more speed-ups, more workplace deaths and injury, more profits for the rich. Even in a nation untouched by battle, more American workers died in the workplace in World War II than on the battle field.

We must remember where our strength is and to organize it. In World War I, in the U.S., the IWW continued to strike for better conditions. That is why we were attacked through the courts, not for opposition to WWI, but because we interfered with the profiteering. In fighting the repression, the IWW made a major mistake. We forgot to organize industrially. We fell back on defense, legal work and community appeals, rather than remember the old American football adage that the best defense is a good offense.

The IWW needs to take the initiative. We need to do Wobbly work. Recently I called a friend and Fellow Worker back east. He told me he couldn't wait till the war was over so IWWs would show up again for meetings. They were too busy fighting against the war to do Wobbly work. I find this infuriating. I don't mean this in disrespect to other movements, but there are too few of us to run off to do the work of every other movement. If you are a Wobbly, we need you to do the IWW's work.

The labor movement is in a greater disarray and more ineffective than anytime I've seen it since I first became active in the early 1970s. Everything I see is talking about how labor needs to get back to the principles of the IWW. Even *Labor Notes*, who has done much work attempting rank and file take over of CLC and AFL-CIO unions, has announced that at this year's conference that IWW-style "minority unionism" will be discussed.

If you believe the IWW is correct, that war can be ended through working class organization, then we must organize where we have power. I'm not saying don't show up for rallies and marches, I'm saying do the IWW's work more. We can bring the world something new and more wonderful – a movement with the ability to bring an end to wars and the system that creates wars in the first place.

★★★

In writing this column, it occurred to me how the rich use our solidarity against us. Because workers feel solidarity with workers in uniform, at least those from their own country, we are goaded to "Support our troops." Here in the U.S., while the anti-war movement was being branded "anti-troops," the Bush administration was cutting social spending for rank-and file-military. Gone, for example, was a special boarding school for children who have both parents sent to war.

Two more questions: How can we break the ruling class' manipulations of our solidarity? In what way can we appeal to workers in uniform that it is not in workers' interest to fight for the ruling class?

★★★

Lastly, I would like to thank FW Mike Ballard for ghost writing last month's Praise Boss. Partially April Fools joke, mostly social experiment, no one noticed. I don't know if that's a good sign, especially since I was complimented on the especially good April column!

F.N. Brill wishes his fellow workers around the world the merriest of May Days. You can return the merriment by writing him care of the IWW, 616 E. Burnside, Portland OR 97214 USA, or by email at fnbrill@yahoo.com.

Alberta's Bill 27 declares class war

BY EDMONTON GENERAL
MEMBERSHIP BRANCH, IWW

After asking Alberta workers, unions, employers and the public to make proposals for labour legislation changes, the Alberta government has ignored these and drafted legislation in secret that restricts workers' rights to unionize and to strike.

Focused on health care unions, Bill 27 removes the right to strike from all health care workers. It further reduces workers' bargaining rights by declaring that they will have a union forced on them as the government reduces health care regions and centralizes them (slashing hundreds of collective agreements to just 36). It further takes away the right of the public to elect health boards, and makes these boards government appointees.

The hassle of democracy, of the right to citizens to elect their own regional health boards, impedes the government's ability to continue reducing funding to health care regions in order to force the privatization of health services in Alberta. This is the real agenda behind Bill 27.

This is an illegal and immoral act by the Tory party dictatorship in Alberta. It bodes ill for all workers, not just hospital or public sector workers. It shows we need a "regime change" in Alberta.

Bill 27 is illegal. It contravenes the International Labour Organization convention on free association and the right to strike, a United Nations convention which Canada signed. Alberta has been declared a major violator of workers rights on par with third world dictatorships by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

With its overwhelming majority in the legislature for over 32 years, the Tory government has no political opposition to stop it from steamrolling over workers' rights.

This is a dictatorship, pure and simple. Of course it's a capitalist dictatorship, one that is elected every four years by a minority of Albertans. With its massive majority in the legislature it can smash public sector workers unions with impunity and privatize our public services.

The Tory dictatorship in Alberta is supported by business and their media hacks like the Sun and the National Post. Its national

voice is the right-wing business politicians of the Canadian Alliance and the National Citizens Coalition.

The first thing dictatorships do is smash unions. The Alberta Tory government is no different. Over the past 32 years it has declared many public sector workers as essential services and removed their right to strike. Bill 27 expands that power. It removes the right to strike from support staff and long term care and extended care workers, as well as paramedics.

It won't be long before the Klein government will do the same to other public sector workers, like those in public and post-secondary education. The recent strike by Alberta teachers showed this government was intent on smashing the Alberta Teachers Association. Having lost that strike in arbitration, the government is now forcing school districts into deficits. Soon it will have the justification to eliminate more school boards and elected trustees, just as it has done with hospital boards.

The government is doing this to be able to privatize the entire public sector. This attack on our right to strike and organize is essentially one more tactic to prepare public services for privatization. This is class war.

The labour movement in Alberta needs to do more than to challenge this in the courts or through international trade agreements (like NAFTA). Our very right to exist is being attacked. Workers rights are being trampled for private gain of the Tories and their business backers.

The only way workers have ever won their rights is by refusing to work for the boss. Our right to strike was won with blood, sweat and tears, not by legislation or through elections.

There is only one answer to Bill 27 – the Klein Dictatorship's declaration of class war: A province-wide general strike.

Bill 27 is just another battle in the class war, a war that the bosses declared on us back in 1995. We almost had a general strike then, but the labour movement failed to bring down the government. Let's not make the same mistake again.

Class war has been declared.

It's time to fight back.

*Clara Freedman Solomon
(1913 – 2000)*



ANARCHIST MEMOIRS & ORAL HISTORY AS TOLD TO PAUL AVRICH

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SOLIDARITY UNIONISM

**Being union
on our own
authority**

BY ALEXIS BUSS

In my last column, I talked about the need to learn from each other's struggles, victories and defeats. I discussed the problems of "service unionism" – how unions organize themselves to provide a professionalized form of worker organizing, rather than "direct unionism" – and the need for a way for unions to organize so that working people control the direction of their organizations, act in direct solidarity with each other, and democratically set the tone for how they are going to go about making the world be a better place to live.

A couple of things have happened since I wrote that column that I'd like to share.

At a recent meeting of Philadelphia's Jobs With Justice, it was announced that a union election for certification with SEIU Local 473 was scheduled at nearby Haverford College.

The next evening a friend who works at Villanova University, just down the street from Haverford, stopped in to say hi and talk about a situation on the job. She is represented by SEIU Local 473, and is an active rank and filer. I mentioned the upcoming election at Haverford. Surprisingly, she had not heard a word about it.

Then out came a flier that has been circulating around the Villanova campus. On the front side: "Vote NO! to temporary workers and a cut in sick days. Villanova wants to discipline us after we use six of our 12 sick days, hire temporary workers to do our jobs, and throw away our sick days to add a holiday that we already get. We want more full-time workers to replace the ones who left, our 12 sick days a year that we bargained for in our contract, and the Martin Luther King holiday – already given to us last year."

On the back was a reproduction of a "Memorandum of Agreement" between Villanova and Local 473 to change the terms of the current contract, which does not ex-

pire until next year.

Last July, I remember helping out a little when university management tried to unilaterally impose a very similar sick day scheme. The current contract provides for 12 sick days per year with unused sick days rolling over to the next year. The unilateral change made it so that after five sick days were taken, workers could be subject to a verbal reprimand; after a couple more sick days, a written warning; and so on until termination on the 12th sick day. It also imposed an "incidents of lateness standard" which the contract did not provide for at all.

The union was disinclined to file a grievance protesting the unilateral change, and even told a rank and filer who called the union's business agent that management could effectively take away seven sick days per year from workers because it was a "reasonable adjustment" to the contract. Workers were able to push the union into filing a grievance because they circulated petitions in support of a grievance and pins that read "Save our sick days, 12 ≠ 5" started popping up all over campus.

The grievance almost couldn't be lost – it's flat-out illegal to unilaterally change conditions without bargaining with the union. But for the diligent bureaucrat there's always a way: the local voluntarily agreed to negotiate an agreement to surrender the conditions won in their last contract. Oddly, every point in the agreement either gives something back to management or restates what was already established.

She left the office with "Vote No" buttons in hand (the vote on the contract change is in a few days). I also suggested some workers might want to walk down the road to encourage their fellow workers at Haverford to vote union. But she balked. "How can I ask people to vote for this union when it actively undermines our working conditions?"

It's hard to answer that. As I write this, I'm told the Haverford election was lost, though I don't know the details. But it's hard to organize when the workers aren't the union, and when the "union" won't stand up to the bosses.

Even in my criticism of service unionism, I think I also sometimes overestimate what service unionism actually is – it isn't necessarily that the union's services are devoted to workers' best interests. At Villanova workers didn't even know that these negotiations were under way, and they seem to have been conducted for management's benefits – not at all for the workers.

So service unionism isn't just providing benefits for workers, like an insurance company or a lawyer; it can also involve unorganizing those benefits for whatever reason seems expedient to those who run the operation. Because workers do not run the union, they have little say over what it does or the quality of "services" it provides.

A smaller example, but one that hits home for me... In Portland, Oregon, there's a network of workers in natural foods stores that grew out of IWW organizing drives over the last couple years. They publish a zine, hold regular meetings, special nights at a local café, and encourage workers to act union on the job. They were ecstatic when they got word that a natural food consumer co-op in Pittsburgh was organizing with the IWW. They immediately got in touch, shared some things that they learned in their efforts, and the East End workers responded in kind – thanking them for their solidarity and expressing interest in keeping in touch.

It's been my privilege to be included in these discussions they're having with one another, because I know that if we're going to succeed it's going to be because of this kind of worker-to-worker solidarity. That, after all, is what unionism is all about.

Fire Bosses, Not Workers

As the City of Boston prepares to lay off up to 1,650 workers to balance its budget, the union that represents many of those workers is demanding that any lay-offs begin with management employees.

SEIU Local 285 says 13 percent of city employees are highly paid managers who generally do not provide direct services to city residents, and that their numbers have been skyrocketing in recent years.

The union has been bargaining for a new contract for three years. With rent increase averaging 7.4 percent annually, Boston's average rent is now nearly two-thirds of the monthly salary of public service employees in SEIU's largest city bargaining unit.

Scabs in the meat

Tyson Foods has begun interviewing scabs to permanently replace Jefferson, Wisconsin, workers who were forced on strike by the giant meat processor to protect their health care coverage and living standards.

The strike began Feb. 28 after lengthy negotiations where Tyson sought extensive pay and benefit cuts. Since the strike began, workers have traveled in 'Truth Squads' to other UFCW-represented Tyson plants. However, these plants continue normal operations, helping Tyson weather the strike.

Thunder Bay strike ends as union walks away

The Industrial Wood & Allied Workers of Canada has just pulled out of a bitter 1,228-day strike in Thunder Bay, Ontario, leaving 26 workers without a job or a union.

The national executive of IWA Canada decided to walk away from the dispute with Industrial Hardwoods which began in November 1999 in a dispute over wages, mandatory drug testing and English literacy as a prerequisite for promotions. The decision came after strikers rejected a concessionary settlement negotiated by union officials.

Greens back charter schools, 60-hour weeks for teachers

The San Francisco Board of Education has approved, with support from Green Party board member, two new charter schools that will be part of a controversial national chain called the Knowledge Is Power Program.

KIPP schools are distinguished by 60-hour work weeks for teachers and close ties to conservative organizations, including the Heritage Foundation, trying to replace public education with private schools. The long hours have led to high teacher turnover at other KIPP schools.

The first nationwide review of charter schools shows that they rely heavily on uncredentialed teachers, fail to secure federal funds for poor or disabled kids, are more segregated, and fare no better than traditional public schools at money management.

Researchers at UC Berkeley and Stanford polled 2,847 charter school teachers in 870 schools in the 1999-2000 school year, 88 percent of the nation's charter schools at the time, finding that nearly half lacked a teaching credential, compared with 9 percent in other public schools. Charter classrooms are also 20 percent more crowded.

The report can be viewed at: <http://pace.berkeley.edu/Chartersummary.pdf>.

IBEW adopts pro-boss code

In response to a convention decision to demand an end to employer blacklists of union militants (the "right to reject"), the Intl. Brotherhood of Electrical Workers has proposed a "Code of Excellence" that would require members to obey the bosses and avoid job actions that might inconvenience the. Oddly, the union does not propose to impose a code on contractors requiring them to respect workers and the union contract, maintain a safe workplace, and such.

Airline workers under attack

Southwest Airlines flight attendants protested against management demands for a longer work day March 12 at airports in Oakland, Baltimore and Chicago.

Southwest wants to extend the workday to 13 hours, said Thom McDaniel, president of Local 556 of the Transport Workers Union, which represents Southwest's 7,500 flight attendants.

Meanwhile, United Airlines has asked a federal bankruptcy court judge set aside its labor agreements as it seeks wage and benefit cuts totalling \$2.56 billion a year. Many workers would also lose their jobs under the proposal.

United employees own 55 percent of the airline, but are prohibited under U.S. law from exercising control of the carrier.

United is seeking to create a low-fare airline, which would take over about 30 percent of its operations.

US Airways, which recently emerged from bankruptcy, had filed a similar motion but ultimately reached agreements for concessions with its unions.

And American reached tentative agreements with all three of its major unions for \$1.8 billion in annual concessions March 31. Six smaller unions had agreed to cuts in earlier talks. Management has also agreed to deep pay cuts.

Voting on the concessions is nearing completion as we go to press. While dissidents have urged a No vote, most observers believe the cuts will be approved by union members wary of making a fight in the present economic crisis, which has hit the airline industry particularly hard.

If the economy does not pick up, other carriers are expected to demand similar concessions from their workers.

More resignations in Ullico scandal

Troubles continue to mount for Ullico, the union-owned insurance and investment firm embroiled in an insider trading scandal involving its board of directors (all of whom are prominent union figures). While the board focuses on the scandal, ratings agencies worry that mounting losses from high-risk investments may bring the business down. Ullico handles billions of dollars in pension and benefit funds for various unions.

Carpenters union president Doug McCarron resigned from the board earlier this year after fellow board members refused to follow his lead in returning the loot. Ullico's chief financial officer has also resigned, as has AFL President John Sweeney, angered at Ullico's refusal to release a sharply critical report on the scandal.

In late March the board finally voted to release the six-month-old report and to cancel the program which made the looting possible, but rejected calls to surrender their profits from the insider trading scheme. Di-

rectors taking advantage of the scheme made profits ranging from \$150,000 to \$2 million each. In all, more than \$13 million was taken from Ullico's coffers through the program. The report found no violation of criminal law, but concluded the transactions were probably illegal under civil laws requiring boards of directors to uphold the interests of policy holders and shareholders.

The decision not to require directors to return those profits prompted John Wilhelm, president of the Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees Union, to resign from the Ullico board. The stock transactions are under investigation by the U.S. attorney in Washington, the Department of Labor, the Securities and Exchange Commission, and the Maryland Insurance Commissioner.

Swedish health care workers strike

BY MATTIAS OLSSON, SAC

The Social and Healthcare syndicates of SAC (Sweden's syndicalist union) are going on strike to support the mainstream union SKAF's strike for better salaries.

"Our wages are lousy, it's an insult," says Sofia Kalpazidou, who works as an assistant for disabled persons. "As it looks now our salaries will be even lower and we will not catch up with the industrial workers in 35 years. We can't accept this!"

But it's not only about the wages, it's also the bad working conditions, the stress of our work, the insecure employment conditions and efforts to set wages individually.

SAC is fighting for more resources to the public sector – for good healthcare, fair wages and full staffing. We do important work and demand decent wages!

More information: www.sac.se/fed/sov/

Janitors strike AMA offices for health benefits

Janitors at the Washington, D.C., building that houses the national offices of the American Medical Association walked off the job April 9 to protest unfair labor practices by the building's cleaning contractor, EMI.

EMI pays janitors as little as \$6.15 per hour with no health benefits. The firm has used illegal threats and intimidation against workers in an effort to block their efforts to win better wages and health coverage. The AMA has refused to intervene.

"It's shameful that a prestigious doctors group wouldn't support people who need health coverage," said Valarie Long, president of SEIU Local 82, which represents the striking janitors.

Campesinos, itengan aviso!

Oregon agri-bosses see wisdom of labor law

BY GEORGE SPEED, PORTLAND

As Oregon agri-business lines up behind a new Farmworker Collective Bargaining Bill, growers seek to render workers' organizing efforts fruitless. HR 2351, a bill in the Oregon House that seeks to codify agricultural labor law, has *rancheros* (growers) twisting their tongues to prove the fairness of their collective bargaining law.

Campesinos (farmworkers) and union activists filled the hearing room in Salem March 26 to express their disgust for the Oregon Farm Bureau's new "collective bargaining" law. The bill extends much of the plagues of the National Labor Relations Act, but little of the harvest. HR 2351 would declare that inducing workers to honor a picket line is an Unfair Labor Practice. It would outlaw harvest time strikes, demand 10 days notice before other strikes, and would require a 'double-majority' for union elections (50% of all eligible voters, and 50% of those who vote). Oh, and supervisors get to vote!

"A worker strikes to defend oneself ... Taking away these rights would be like cutting off our hands and feet," stated Rosa Chapina, a farmworker and member of Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste, the Oregon-based farmworker union.

Chapina enlightened the Salem bureaucrats with testimony on the struggle of Oregon campesinos. Responding to the NLRA-borrowed language banning secondary boycotts, Chapina explained, "Boycotting is not

a crime but a right." She elaborated that boycotts are a way to gain community support and inform consumers about their choices.

Criticizing a provision allowing rancheros to split workers into 'seasonal' and 'year-round' units, campesino Javier Ceja calmly rejected a ranchero's right to divide workers. "All workers on one farm have the right to be in one union," Ceja said in Spanish to the all-Anglo panel of state representatives. Even with the union election process "expedited" (as one farm boss attorney enjoyed saying), Ceja remained unsatisfied. "Waiting 18 days for an election makes no sense when many harvests come to an end in two to three weeks. There is no point in having a contract after the harvest is over," said Ceja.

Indeed, even if the union wins the election, a contract would be unlikely. In his testimony, Oregon AFL-CIO representative Brad Witt exposed the absurdity of the bill's 'meet and confer' language – which doesn't require an agreement or even an outcome to the collective bargaining process.

All three speakers on the Industry panel lauded the wonders of labor law while donning their best 'down-home' façade. Broccoli ranchera Piper Sweeney said, "There has to be rules to follow ... Without rules, it's uncomfortable as a farmer to have these workers there and the union sending someone in to cause trouble." The overflow room burst into laughter as Sweeney (whose screen debut had her driving a tractor in an anti-GMO



labeling ad) entertained PCUN supporters with her unsupported allegations.

Attorney for the Oregon Farm Bureau, Tim Barasik, extolled the similarities between HR 2351 and the NLRA with regard to boycotts and other ULPs. Barasik noted, however, that unlike the NLRA, the farmworker bill establishes an Agricultural Labor Board free from political appointments – making use of our free and open democracy where anyone can run for office (if they have the money). The Board would be made up of five nonpartisan representatives elected from each of the congressional districts.

Defending the ban on harvest strikes, Barasik appealed to the state reps with the

reasoning that strikes hurt both farmers and workers. "We have to find a better way," the corporate attorney implored. Similarly, union local president-turned Oregon Association of Nurserymen lobbyist Mark Simmons wants only a "fair and balanced system" that honors workers' "right of choice."

The third panel was ostensibly the "workers" panel. Oddly, the panel had Adrien Delgado, a farm supervisor, and Trinny Marquez, a campesina, who addressed not the bill but their personal beef with PCUN. At one point the hearing room heated up as Chairwoman Betsy Close reprimanded union activist Maria Damaris Silva. Silva was simply pointing out that Marquez, acting as Delgado's translator, left out the supervisor's pro-union statements and translated only his anti-union comments.

As for HR 2351, insiders predict that the bill might pass the Republican House and be held up in the Oregon Senate. Oregon labor could wind up pressuring Democrat Ted Kulongowski to veto the bill as a last resort. Even though Kulongowski's victory relied heavily on union political support, a veto is not guaranteed.

For unionists, this bill highlights the dangers of letting the government determine the tactics of workers' struggle. If pro-business legislators can set all the rules, workers will never get a fair shake.

Although PCUN has argued for a farm worker collective bargaining bill similar to California's, the Oregon-based independent union demands that this bill be scrapped. If HR 2351 passes and becomes law in Oregon, legal organizing in the fields will become nearly impossible. Campesinos might just have to develop a whole new way to wage the class war.

Rancheros, ¡cuidense!

'We Only Want the Earth':

James Connolly, Irish Syndicalism & the 1913 Dublin Lockout

BY BRADEN CANNON, X351663

In honour of the anniversary of the May 12, 1916, execution of James Connolly

Shortly after the founding of the IWW in July of 1905, Irish agitator, organizer and freedom fighter James Connolly was on the streets of Newark, N.J., calling on workers to join the new industrial union. Connolly spent the years 1902 through 1910 in the United States, and from the inception of the IWW until his return to Ireland in 1910, he was a devoted organizer for the OBU.

During his time spent in the States and with the IWW, Connolly developed his theories of revolutionary industrial unionism, and it was this period of his life which prepared him for the struggles which would consume him for the remainder of his life upon his return to Ireland. From his experiences as the head of the IWW District Council of New York City, Connolly developed the skills which would be needed in the great Dublin Lockout of 1913 and a host of other struggles rooted in Irish class conflict.

Although he played a large role in the IWW's decision in 1908 to disassociate itself entirely with political parties, Connolly himself was involved with a host of parties throughout his life. Connolly believed that political parties could serve a purpose in maintaining ideological consistency, a propaganda tool subordinate to industrial organizing and direct action. It was this two-part strategy, rooted in socialist politics and Wobbly industrial unionism which would inform his apparently contradictory roles in Ireland as a labour agitator and Republican fighter.

Upon his return to Ireland in 1910, Connolly immediately joined the Irish Transport and General Workers Union, a radical industrial union founded in 1909 by syndicalist James Larkin. The ITGWU operated under the principles of class struggle and unity in the face of ruling class oppression, be it from Catholic or Protestant bosses. The ITGWU was Ireland's "fighting union," and its reputation as such was established through a series of harsh and bloody strikes.

In 1911, Connolly was posted by the ITGWU as organizer for the Belfast local. Prior to Connolly's arrival in Belfast, the bosses were able to block the ITGWU in the north due to the traditional rift between Protestant and Catholic workers. However, having experience dealing with workers of all nationalities, religions and ethnicities as an IWW organizer in New York City, Connolly was able to appeal to Belfast workers' class consciousness and firmly establish the ITGWU in that divided city. With the union entrenched in the north, Connolly's services would soon be required in Dublin.

During the pre-war years, living conditions in Dublin were some of the worst in all of Europe. One third of the city's 300,000 population lived in slums, with most families living in one room off of twenty shillings or less a week. In these conditions, working class militancy was on the rise and the bosses were keen to crush the ITGWU. Enraged by the union's practices of sympathy strikes, working class solidarity and refusal to enter into collective bargaining, the owner of Dublin United Tramways Company, William Martin Murphy, decided to take decisive action against the ITGWU.

In August of 1913, Murphy began firing union members. Dublin officials began posting more police officers and soldiers in the streets, precipitating a greater level of repression. The union-busting tactics were opposed by the ITGWU through swift, partial strikes. A massive rally was planned for August 31, but was prohibited by Dublin officials, and Connolly was imprisoned for his role in organizing the event. The rally became known as Bloody Sunday 1913, as two workers were killed and 600 hospitalized after police attempted to break up the meeting with brutal baton charges.

On September 3, the Dublin Employers Federation declared a general lockout. Connolly, still in prison, staged a hunger strike to secure his release, precipitating the tactic that would be used with great effect

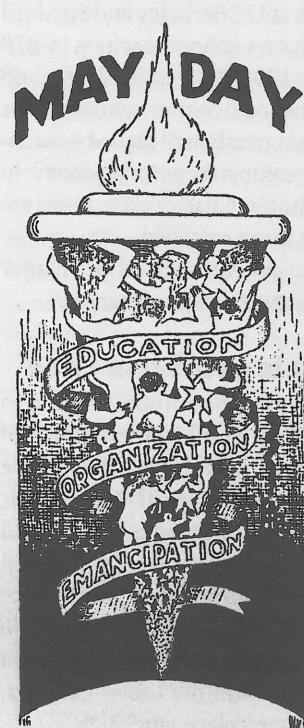
70 years later by IRA prisoners.

By Sept. 11, the lockout was complete and 20,000 workers were out of a job. Connolly became acting ITGWU general secretary in October after Larkin was imprisoned for incitement. After a month on the defensive, Connolly launched an offensive of his own. Mass pickets were set up to counteract scabs throughout Dublin. Connolly also founded the Irish Citizen Army, which consisted of armed and trained workers, to protect the pickets from scabs, police and soldiers. Finally, Connolly put his theories on political action to work, organizing Liberal Party defeats in November by-elections across Ireland and Great Britain. Connolly also encouraged working class solidarity across the British Isles. Workers in England and Wales responded with sympathy strikes which led to the release of James Larkin after only 17 days imprisonment.

Despite these victories, the Dublin Lockout ended in defeat in January 1914 due to the betrayal of the ITGWU by the conservative Trade Union Congress, which decided to help transport scab workers to Dublin.

The Lockout was not a total loss, however. Syndicalism remained a strong force in Ireland until the Irish Civil War and helped bring about the Republic of Ireland in the coming years. The Irish Citizen Army, led by Connolly, played a major role in the Easter Rising of 1916, an event which precipitated the Irish Revolution and the birth of Irish independence. Furthermore, the ITGWU was able to create real working class solidarity which would be a key ingredient in the establishment of the Irish Republic.

However, Connolly played his most bittersweet role in Irish syndicalism and liberation through his martyrdom in 1916 when, on May 12, he was executed in the aftermath of the failed Easter Rising for his leadership in the revolt. Although he never lived to see a free Ireland, James Connolly is still an inspiration to Irish unionists and militant workers across the world.



MAY DAY GREETINGS

In Honor of My Father
ANTTI SIITONEN
(1888-1944)

who taught me to
respect workers'
picket lines

— Harry Siitonan,
SF Bay Area GMB

AFL sympathizes with unemployed, but won't fight for jobs

BY HARRY KELBER, LABOR TALK

More than half a million U.S. jobs vanished in the first three months of 2003, according to the Department of Labor, bringing the total number of private-sector jobs lost since January 2001 to 2.6 million. Nearly a million jobless workers who are still actively looking for work have exhausted their benefits. Millions more have given up.

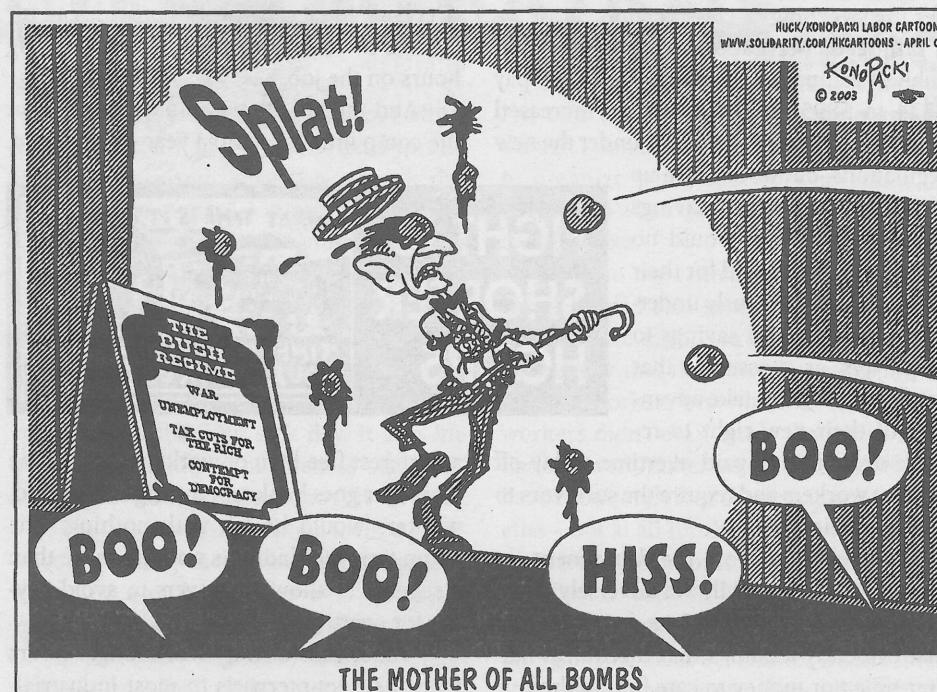
In response to the crisis, Congress is considering cutting back unemployment benefits even further, arguing that the current system "encourages dependence." And besides, they need the money for tax cuts for millionaires.

The Bush administration has focused so intently on the war in Iraq that it has paid almost no attention to the hundreds of thousands of Americans who have been victimized by a slumping economy.

AFL-CIO President John Sweeney periodically recites facts and figures about rising unemployment. One of his blockbusters: "On average, America has lost 105,000 private-sector jobs every month since President George W. Bush's inauguration."

Sweeney easily debunks President Bush's argument that his proposed tax cuts that mainly benefit the rich will create lots of new jobs. He points to Bush's massive \$1.3 trillion tax cut that cost us 2,400,000 jobs.

Those Sweeney statements make good listening, but they don't put food on the table or help pay the mortgage or utility bills. Those displaced people, a cross section of the American work force, need jobs – not only for the money but to assert their hu-



manity and usefulness to our society.

There is no organization that is better equipped or more duty-bound to help unemployed workers than the AFL-CIO. So why are our national labor leaders unwilling to come to their aid in their hour of need? Why don't they consider the issue of unemployment sufficiently important to wage a national campaign for jobs programs?

The idea of public works jobs wasn't a pipedream in the 1930s, when millions of the unemployed were put to work building schools, hospitals, parks, dams and roads, and cultural workers found careers as writ-

ers, artists, musicians and entertainers.

Labor leaders are too easily intimidated when opponents of a government-created work force cry: "Where will Congress get the money to pay for these jobs?" The money is there to be had, and the Pentagon has provided an answer in the war against Iraq.

The United States will try to erase the image it has around the world as an invader whose merciless bombardment of Baghdad and other cities needlessly caused the deaths of thousands of Iraqi soldiers and civilians, as well as American fighters.

They hope to win the hearts and minds

of Iraqis as "liberators" by rebuilding the cities and villages they devastated during the war and creating a shining "democracy" that will be a model for the Middle East.

That will take a lot of money, but Congress is ready and willing to supply the Pentagon with whatever funds are necessary. It has already given the military \$80 billion in supplementary funds, as the first of many future installments, even though the federal budget deficit is expected to rise to \$400 billion and beyond.

A big chunk of the money will be used to repair Iraq's infrastructure: its roads, airports, water and electricity systems, and restore thousands of buildings, including schools, hospitals, nurseries, courthouses and other vital institutions. Iraqis' transportation and communication facilities will be modernized, and Baghdad will be rebuilt. Under the Pentagon's reconstruction plan, Iraqis will have steady employment for a long time to come.

So why can't Congress do the same for America? Creating useful jobs for the unemployed is one of the best investments the government can make. The wages these re-employed men and women earn will quickly be poured back into the economy because they spend it on necessities.

The AFL-CIO can no longer duck its responsibility to the nation's growing unemployed. If it is unwilling to fight for public works projects, then it must come up with an alternative strategy. Abandoning the unemployed is unacceptable.

The IWW and the Trade Unions

BY ADAM LINCOLN, AUSTRALIA

The following is excerpted from the current issue of Direct Action, the newspaper of the Australian ROC. Copies with the complete article are available from IWW headquarters:

The question of how the IWW can and should organise workers who are trade union members is central to any attempt to transform the IWW into a union which is able to challenge the bosses, locally and globally. The IWW attempts to organise in a manner that provides workers with the means to improve their existing working conditions and ultimately counter the massive power held by global corporations and their servants in parliament and the media.

In Australia the current environment in which the IWW is organising is one of declining trade union membership and a reduction in working conditions and rights to act collectively.

During the 1980s, under a so-called progressive government, we had what was called the 'Accord.' It was a pact between government and unions that guaranteed minimum wage rises in return for industrial peace and productivity improvements. Through being able to 'control' wages, monetary and fiscal policy was used to deregulate the Australian economy and destroy thousands of jobs.

Before the Accord, workers in militant unions were pace-setters whose improved wages and conditions were won through industry-wide campaigns and strikes and then passed on to less organised sectors. Under the Accord, conditions were set via 'deals' between government and union leaders, resulting in a decline in workers' militancy and organisation. During the 1990s, Australia moved from a more European system of industry-wide bargaining to enterprise by enterprise bargaining (as in the US).

Following the election of the right-wing Liberal/National Party government in 1996, this trend was accelerated, whilst legally sanctioned rights for unions to negotiate such enterprise agreements were reduced. This has turned unions into service organisations in order to operate in this environment. Just negotiating collective contracts absorbs most union's resources. During the wasted years of the Accord (which

directly preceded our current U.S.-style site-by-site approach) militancy was lost as pay rises were handed down from above. When unions were forced into the site-by-site approach, the militancy to operate in this environment had been lost. Some unions are successfully operating as genuine 'organising' unions but the damage has been done.

In Australia, the IWW does not have any legal right to negotiate collective agreements, maintain and improve minimum rates awards, or represent members in industrial tribunals. To achieve this over here would be next to impossible, require millions of dollars in legal costs, and would result in the entire political, union and boss class uniting to prevent it.

In fact I am thankful that this path is not possible over here. It is the experience of many unions that years of state-sanctioned bargaining have only decreased militancy, wrapped unions up in legal knots which make taking any kind of industrial action as legally complicated as possible, and led to timid unions, afraid to rock the boat.

In this environment, militant unions are holding their ground, while other unions are in decline. There is a growing anger and resentment amongst many workers at the social and economic effects of rampant globalisation, however the government has been masterful at diverting the anger of many workers against those perceived as threatening the interests of Australian workers – the poor, unemployed and immigrants. A racist backlash against immigrants has allowed the major political parties to hide the economic causes of poverty and wage slavery.

Where does the IWW fit in?

The IWW can and should organise where trade union membership, coverage rights and awards exist and don't exist – i.e. everywhere!

There are some sectors where trade unions have no real ability to organise due to the fairly rigid bureaucratic structure of most of them – sectors like 'cash in hand,' seasonal workers, labour hire, 'illegals,' self-employed, etc. The IWW is perfect there because those workers have little 'legal' rights and self-organising will deliver greater ben-

efits than doing nothing. However in established industries where trade unions currently operate, I think the two approaches can go together.

Trade unions offer a range of 'services,' whether legal and industrial representation or member discounts like 'union shopper.' The IWW cannot reproduce these 'services' (and in my opinion should not try to). The IWW should be the union which teaches workers how to use direct action on the job and in the community to fight the boss class, and to unite and inspire fellow workers with a radical vision for the future. It should be the glue that binds both trade union members and unorganised workers together – and the unemployed.

Trade unions are often very bad at skilling members and sharing responsibility; they like to keep stuff within the leadership as knowledge is power, and members with too much knowledge may threaten the leadership. Trade union members who are also IWW members will be better able to keep their officials on a tight leash, and where their union doesn't help them or sells them out, they can use their IWW local union to use direct action to beat the boss.

Trade unions can never be as democratic as the IWW or provide a radical vision for the working class like the IWW. Trade unions were set up to get a bit more out of the boss, and to protect and improve wages, safety, etc. on the job. If a trade union does that well their members are still streets ahead of all the other poor bastards getting screwed by their boss every day. But no trade union will abolish the wage system or really confront the privileges of the ruling class.

How the IWW can benefit trade union members

- Not compete with TUs on their terms, i.e. contract negotiations, union services, legal advice etc. Leave that to the current TUs.
- Provide practical advice and assistance



on self-management of struggles and use of direct action.

• Solidarity from workers in a range of industries, workplaces and other countries.

• The IWW is the 'glue' that gives trade union members more power on the job, more solidarity from other fellow workers, and a real voice (and responsibility) in their local IWW structure.

• Workers join a mainstream union for legal and industrial services. Workers join the IWW to have a fighting union to beat the boss using direct action, and keep the gains they may have won through contracts. The two approaches can go together.

• Enable trade union members to gain maximum benefit from their existing union because once they have militant job organisation and job democracy (and experience in direct action struggles) they will be in a better position to hold their officials accountable; and where this cannot be done, they have the IWW structure to fall back on.

• Provide trade union activists with a more worthwhile avenue for their free time than political activity with so-called progressive political movements.

continued on page 10

Overtime under attack

continued from page 1

mary goal is "modernizing the regulations to exempt more classifications of workers from overtime pay."

Thus, the proposed regulations would turn the overtime laws on their head – creating a presumption that workers are exempt from overtime protection where the old standards assumed they were covered.

However, in many ways the new regulations are little clearer than the decades-old rules. The proposed regulations are filled with phrases such as "requiring a high level of skill or training," "work of substantial importance," or "primary duty" of "performing ... non-manual work" – all of which exempt employees from overtime protection – the definitions of which are far from clear.

Workers who sell and deliver soft drinks or snacks to local grocery stores would lose overtime protection if their primary job is to sell, even if they spend many hours delivering the cans and candy bars. That's a change from the current rule that workers who spend more than 20 percent of their time delivering, loading and unloading get overtime.

Health care workers such as nurses, X-ray technicians and dental hygienists would no longer receive overtime pay. Accountants, chefs, insurance adjusters, journalists and teachers would also no longer be eligible. But the regulations specify that construction workers, longshoremen and truck drivers would remain covered by overtime.

"It's a massive give-away for employers at the expense of workers," said Nick Clark, assistant general counsel of the United Food and Commercial Workers.

The Labor Department estimates that 640,000 workers would lose overtime pay; Clark says that is "grossly underestimated" because it doesn't count workers who earn

between \$22,000 and \$65,000 a year who may also see their overtime eliminated under the sweeping re-classification.

Indeed, the Labor Department's own analysis estimates that employers would pay \$334 to \$895 million a year in increased wages and overtime payments under the new regulations, but would save up to \$1.9 billion a year in savings from workers who would no longer have to be paid for their overtime. This seriously understates the potential savings to employers, as it assumes that employers will not take advantage of their new right to require unlimited unpaid overtime to lay-off current workers and require the survivors to pick up their work.

In another section, the department asserts that "the rule will not adversely affect the well-being of families" – a determination that evidently assumes that it requires neither time nor money to care for children.

The proposed regulations do not require congressional approval because they merely "interpret" the Act. However, more extensive changes – such as abolishing the 40-hour week for non-exempt employees – would require legislation.

Both H.R. 1119 and S. 317 would allow employers to require more mandatory overtime, encouraging them to schedule even more overtime. On the surface, the legislation says it is the employee who decides whether to accept comp time instead of paid overtime. But "this ignores the reality that most workers have no say in their hours or working conditions," Ellen Bravo, director of 9to5, National Association of Working Women, told the House Workforce Protections subcommittee at a March 12 hearing.

Although workers are desperate for more time with their families and more control

over their schedules, "HR 1119 does nothing to address the problem of mandatory overtime. In fact, ... this bill provides an incentive to require workers to endure long hours on the job."

And the bill allows employers to sit on the comp time for up to a year – in essence,

FIGHT for SHORTER HOURS



an interest free loan of workers' time. If the employer goes bankrupt during that period, workers would be left with nothing. The comp time legislation is nothing more than a scheme to allow employers to avoid paying for overtime.

"Americans already work longer hours than their counterparts in most industrialized nations," Bravo noted, adding that workers exempt from the FLSA's overtime protections work over twice as many overtime hours as those who are non-exempt.

Workers' productivity reached the point where a 4-hour day at a living wage has long been realizable. Instead, for millions of workers the 8-hour day is once again becoming little more than a fading dream.

Even as productivity continues rising, wages stagnate and millions of our fellow workers are unemployed, the bosses are demanding the "right" to 80-hour work weeks and unlimited mandatory overtime. Stopping this assault will require building a new shorter hours movement, like the one that fought for the 8-hour day in 1886. Generations of workers around the world fought for the 8-hour day; we do not have the right to let it be taken away.

Australia: Right to refuse overtime

The New South Wales (Australia) Industrial Relations Commission has ruled that employees in the state will have the right to refuse to work unreasonable levels of overtime if there is any risk to employee health and safety, it impacts on the employee's personal circumstances including family and carer responsibilities, or the employer does not give reasonable notice.

Workers covered by the decision include retail workers, clerical workers, hospitality, construction industry workers, teachers, nurses and public sector workers.

Poorest workers forced to pay for safety gear

The United Food and Commercial Workers and eight other unions are calling for a new federal regulation to help protect low-wage, mostly Hispanic immigrant workers in meatpacking and poultry plants. While most employers pay for required safety equipment for workers, the government requires employers to provide safety gear such as hard hats, special gloves and protective glasses but does not specify who will pay for it. Growing numbers of employers are passing the costs along to workers.

The UFCW cites a meatpacking plant in Omaha, Neb., that requires workers to wear rubber boots, but deducts their cost from workers' paychecks. In some poultry plants, workers are required to pay as much as \$65 for metal mesh gloves. Many workers can not afford these charges, and so wear worn-out gear that no longer protects them.

Mother Jones Elementary School

The Prince George's County (Maryland) school board has named a new elementary school in the working-class town of Adelphi after Mary "Mother" Jones, the veteran labor activist who attended the founding convention of the IWW. The motion approving the name noted the importance of naming the school after someone who "will serve as an inspiration and source of identity for the school and its students."

On a less inspiring note, the U.S. Department of Labor's "Labor Hall of Fame" is considering honoring former U.S. Senator Robert Taft, co-sponsor of the notorious Taft-Hartley slave labor act, and a politician who throughout his sordid career always sought to promote the interests of the master class.

The "Labor Hall of Fame" was established under the Carter administration; the Bush administration recently turned to groups such as the rabidly pro-business Cato Institute for nominations. This is what comes of relying upon the government to do what labor ought to do for itself.

Email: The 'killer app' of online campaigning

Given a choice between having a website or an electronic mailing list, I always tell people to choose the mailing list.

The web is a fantastic tool – don't get me wrong. But there's nothing like email when you want to do online campaigning. And the reason for this is quite simple. If you want people to do something that you mention only on your website, they have to first of all come to your website. But with email, the message comes to them.

We don't always remember to visit certain websites. But we all read – or at least skim – our email. Email is the ultimate 'push' technology, to recycle a phrase that was popular several years back.

Every major news site understands this, and they will all go to great lengths to get your email address. But unions have been incredibly lax in getting their members' email addresses. Unions that have had websites for years, that have invested enormous sums in the new communication technologies, often don't use email, the oldest, simplest and yet most powerful of those technologies.

I was talking the other day with people who work for one of the largest unions in Britain. The union has around 700,000 members. Of these they have email addresses for something like 4,000. That means that more than 99% of the union's members cannot be reached by email.

In Canada, I was stunned to discover last year that some of the largest unions not only don't have email addresses for members, but don't maintain a membership list of any kind. (All the information is in the hands of the local unions.)

U.S. unions that are campaigning online have been quick to discover that the lack of members' email addresses is the Achilles Heel of union campaigning online.

How do we get members' email ad-



resses? First of all, 'email' has got to be a field on membership application forms. Amazingly, many unions still recruit new members without asking for their email addresses. But what to do about members who joined some time ago, before email addresses became common? Those members need to be persuaded to reveal their email addresses to the union. One obvious way to do this is to offer reduced dues. Members who agree to receive most communications electronically, rather than on paper, should pay less – reflecting the reduced costs to the union.

But it's not enough to merely collect email addresses. Those addresses need to be tightly integrated with the union's membership database. Want to do a mass mailing to the union's female members? You need to have a 'gender' field in the database. Want to write only to members who work in book shops? 'Employer type' has to be a field in the database. Intelligent integration of the union's membership database with its email lists can allow extremely targeted mailings, mobilizing members to attend regional or sectoral events, for example.

Of course all this is meaningless if the union doesn't use the email addresses. I worked with one union which managed to collect thousands of email addresses, but when we tried to do regular mass mailings, it turned out that no one had a clue what it was we wanted to say. In the end, the mailing list fell into disuse.

LabourStart has had a mailing list since 1998, and today has close to 15,000 email addresses of unionists from around the world on that list. Every week, we send out a mailing to those people which includes a number of regular features. These include a regular 'labour website of the week' – and we

make sure to include the web address (URL) of the winner in the text of the message so that you can click through to the winning website. Another feature is almost always an online campaign of one kind or another. We use the weekly mailing to update readers about new features on the website as well.

We try to keep our mailings brief and to the point. If there's more to say, we include a link to a web page with more information. The mailings are always text-only – we never send out messages as web pages, which many people cannot see properly on their computers. Finally, we make it easy for people to unsubscribe, with an explanation at the bottom of every mass mailing.

Given a choice between a website and a mailing list I'd always choose the mailing list. Fortunately, that's a choice you'll never have to make. The key to successful online campaigning is to use both tools together.

Full contact info for Eric Lee at: <http://www.labourstart.org/contact.shtml>



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Millions strike against war drive

Millions of Europeans briefly stopped work at midday March 14 in protest against the planned attack on Iraq. In Germany, the strikes briefly halted vehicle production at three Volkswagen factories and a Daimler-Chrysler plant.

The three main Italian union federations followed up with a massive two-hour general strike the day after the attack on Iraq began. Another general strike called by independent base unions April 2, saw over a million workers quit work for the day.

Hundreds of thousands of workers joined demonstrations across Spain April 10 in conjunction with a general strike called by the General Confederation of Workers (CGT) and the General Union of Workers (UGT) – the date was selected to allow for the lengthy advance notice required under Spanish law. Spain's largest union, the communist-affiliated CCOO, refused to join the strike, though some CCOO affiliates took part on a local level.

The UGT called a two-hour strike to coincide with the demonstrations, while the

Sweeney scabs on anti-war movement

BY CHARLES WALKER

Less than 24 hours after U.S. missiles struck Baghdad, AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney announced his "unequivocal" support for the war and presumably for the war's aims March 20.

"Now that a decision has been made," he said in a prepared statement, "we are unequivocal in our support of our country and America's men and women on the frontlines as well as their families here at home."

Nothing in the context of the statement indicates the slightest doubt that the war on Iraq deserves the absolute support of America's workers.

Clothing his "unequivocal" support for the war as support for the nation's military personnel, Sweeney is echoing statements made by the top leadership of the Democratic Party. Teamsters president James P. Hoffa, a charter member with former Secretary of State George Shultz of the Committee for the Liberation of Iraq, agrees with Sweeney, saying that "the battle for the liberation of Iraq has begun, we must close ranks [and] rally behind our troops." But the real supporters of the men and women in harm's way, the burgeoning U.S. and worldwide anti-war movements, are demanding that the troops be brought home – right now!

Expressing his confidence in the U.S. government's intentions, Sweeney said that, "We sincerely hope this conflict will result in a more democratic and prosperous Iraq and that it will be resolved with little loss of life." But Sweeney's sincere hopes will be cold comfort to innocent bystanders in the wrong place, at the wrong time.

Sweeney failed to explain why he thinks that a more prosperous and democratic Iraq will emerge as a U.S. protectorate, when the same U.S. government is determined to stifle the human, civil and union rights of its own population, or so, at times, Sweeney would have us believe.

When the AFL-CIO at its February Executive Council meeting adopted a resolution opposing a unilateral attack on Iraq, the document stated that, "The president [Bush] has not fulfilled his responsibility to make a compelling and coherent explanation to the American people and the world about the need for military action at this time." That was true, and it's still true.

It's also true that Sweeney has failed to make a "compelling and coherent" explanation to the labor federation's 13 million members why Sweeney seemingly no longer holds that the "American people and the world are entitled to an explanation "about the need for military action at this time."

The February resolution was understood by many anti-war activists in the labor movement to be quite limited, perhaps no more

smaller CGT called for a 24-hour strike. Spain's government backs the war despite massive public opposition, although it did abandon plans to lend soldiers to the effort.

The unions demanded that employers donate any sums docked from workers' pay for joining the strike to humanitarian organizations to aid the people of Iraq.

On the eve of war, the Canadian Union of Public Employees called on its half-million members to join anti-war rallies. "Now is the time for all CUPE members to show their solidarity with workers across the world in opposing the war in Iraq and protesting for peace," said CUPE President Judy Darcy

CUPE Secretary-Treasurer Claude Genereux said a massive show of solidarity is needed because it is workers who are suffering most in the war on Iraq. "It is not the political leaders or the oil company executives who will lose their lives or livelihoods. It's workers, women and children. It is their communities and economies that are being destroyed in this illegal and illegitimate war that Bush has started," says Genereux.

Brazen profiteers

than a tactical difference with Washington's warmongers. Nevertheless, they hoped that the resolution would give them some "space" for their anti-war organizing. By the same logic that "space" is now gone.

But that doesn't mean that workers' efforts to bring the troops home now are likely to cease. Anti-war sentiment in the labor movement is growing stronger, even as Sweeney seeks to mislead workers as to the reactionary aims of this war. Sweeney's failure to stand up to the pressures of the nation's ruling circles to "rally 'round the flag," is of the same cloth with his failure to put up a real fight for workers' living standards.

Sweeney has no business being a shop steward, let alone being the head of organized labor's largest federation. His urge for basically collaborative relations with Corporate America explains his support of the war on Iraq; just as it explains his feeble resistance to Corporate America's downsizing of the U.S. labor movement.

Should the troops be brought home now? Should organized labor build its own fighting political party? Should unions resist the war on labor, on workers' living standards? Is Sweeney, the labor bureaucrat, the leader for organized labor's fightback? To pose the question is to answer it.

Army slashes dock pay

As the war on Iraq draws toward its bloody end, the profiteers are grabbing their piece of the action. Before the corpses of untold thousands of our fellow workers turned cold, U.S. troops were moving in to secure Iraq's oil fields.

Plans are afloat to have an American oil industry executive placed in charge of getting Iraqi crude flowing once again. The U.S. has kindly offered to rebuild the facilities it destroyed (the people, of course, can not be pieced back together), but mandated that only U.S. companies can bid on the work.

Unlike Afghans, however, who suffered the humiliation of having Bush forget to allocate any funds for reconstruction in the next budget (Congress scraped up a measly \$300 million – probably less than the cost of the munitions dumped on the country), Iraq won't be forgotten. The Bush administration has already indicated its intent to use the proceeds from selling Iraq's oil to U.S. companies to pay U.S. companies for the reconstruction effort. All this, of course, for the benefit of the Iraqi people.

All this is a bit brazen even for an administration that went to war over the expressed objections of the overwhelming majority of the world's population. But it's hard to see straight when your vision is obstructed by dollar signs.

Saint John, New Brunswick, longshoremen declared they would refuse to work military cargo destined for the Iraqi war. In Santos, the largest port in Brazil and Latin America, dockworkers held a 24-hour action, boycotting ships and goods under the U.S. or British banner.

In Japan the DORO-CHIBA union struck 700 train runs to protest the war on Iraq, privatization and repression.

In Stockholm, Swedish syndicalists helped organize a blockade of an Ericsson factory April 8. Ericsson is one of Sweden's largest munitions makers, supplying military equipment to the British army.

Australian construction unions closed work sites across the country as the bombs began to fall. UnionsWA Secretary Reynolds said, We will close jobs down continually around the country while our troops are overseas slaughtering women and kids."

But unions in the state of Victoria backed off from promises of industrial action to stop the war effort, instead holding symbolic protests in their workplaces March 27 to condemn Australian involvement in the war against Iraq. VTHC secretary Leigh Hubbard said unions had a responsibility to debate the issues of war with their members. He warned that "the United States will not stop in Iraq. This will be the first war of many. We have to make it very clear to our members that Australia should not be involved in building a new US empire."

More than 60,000 people marched through Berlin's city center that day, carrying banners reading "Stop this oily war" and "Yankees go home."

In Ireland, the president of the Dublin Council of Trade Unions was among several unionists calling on workers at Shannon airport to refuse to cooperate with the refueling of U.S. military planes.

A threat of a general strike, combined

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with massive demonstrations in the street, forced two postponements of plans to send 600 military engineers and 100 medics to Iraq before the proposal was forced through an April 2 special session besieged by protesters. The KCTU and FKTU union federations had pledged to strike if the government sent troops. The Korean Teachers and Educational Workers Union said its members would teach anti-war themes and distribute anti-war stickers during class.

In England, the Trades Union Congress abandoned the anti-war movement March 19, days before the "Labour Party" government joined the U.S. in its military attack against Iraq. While expressing its "regret" that "military action involving British troops now appears inevitable," the TUC refused to back last-minute demonstrations or other actions aimed at halting the war drive.

Instead, the TUC called on workers to rally to the support of war: "Now that parliament is committed to this course, British armed forces and their families, and other staff involved in the military action, including those in civilian roles, will expect and must receive the support of the British people," the TUC General Council said.

California teachers reject war drive

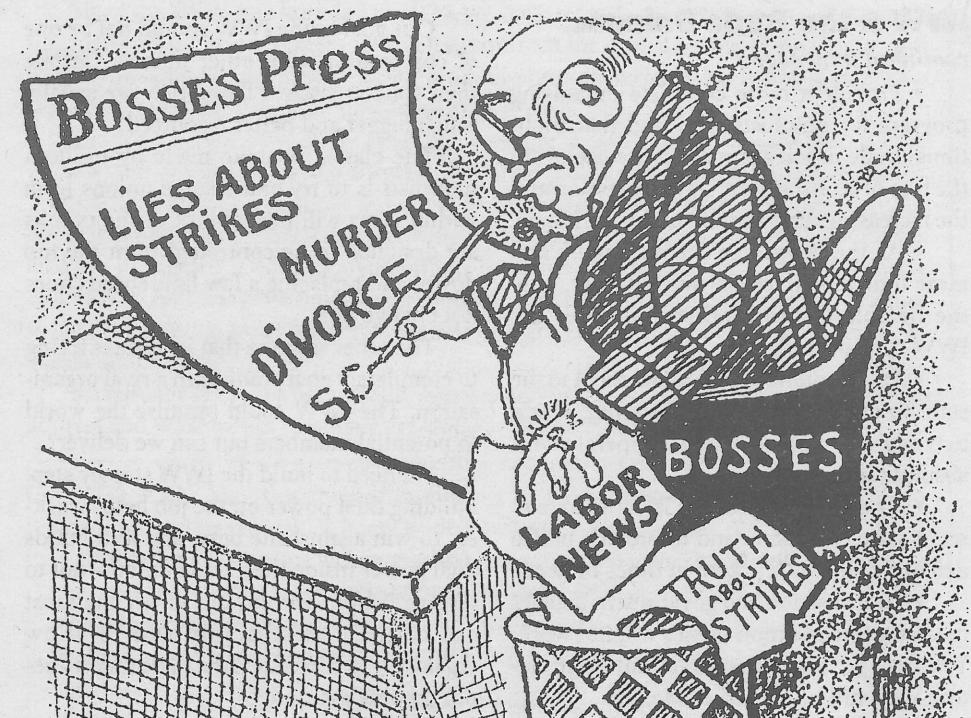
Delegates to the California Federation of Teachers convention responded to the AFT's endorsement of the Bush administration's war drive with a resolution titled "No to War! For the Defense of Public Education!"

Approved two days after bombing began, the resolution strongly criticizes "what is nothing but a war for oil and empire."

"Expressing the overwhelming will of the majority of the world's population, we call for military action to cease ... immediately so that American and British troops can be removed from harm's way and brought safely home – and to spare the Iraqi people more death, destruction and suffering."

Soldiers refuse slaughter

Several British and U.S. soldiers have refused to join the slaughter. At least three British soldiers in Iraq were ordered home after protesting that the war is killing innocent civilians, and may face court martial for refusing to obey orders. A number of U.S. reservists have refused to report for duty on the war front, applying for conscientious objector discharges.



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Review: Reworking labor songs in rich harmony

BY JOSHUA FREEZE

Don't be fooled by the title "Banks of Marble," the new recording by Folk This – this isn't simply a rerecording of the same versions of the folk songs we love but have heard a million times. Folk This incorporates beautiful harmonies better than anyone I've heard in a long time. Many songs on the CD are familiar and none are originals, but there are several I hadn't heard before.

The first song, "Coal Tattoo," which Folk This describes as "a tribute to the American working class," is one of the best. About an out-of-work union miner, stained and battered from years in the mines, its lyrics will resonate for Wobblies in any job.

Another you may not have heard is "In Contempt." Written in the 1950s, its words

on the ever-widening expanse of prisons in our society could easily have been written yesterday.

My personal favorite on the recording is "Rote Zora." Rote Zora was a revolutionary armed feminist group in Germany in the 1980s, named after a German story book character, a sort of female Robin Hood. The original artist is not known, but was likely someone involved in the German autonomous movement. The song is to the tune of Pippi Longstocking, but as I listened to the words it was familiar for another reason. The German punk band Slime did their own version, the only one I had heard before this CD. Folk This sings it in German and then in English, and both are great.

More familiar songs on the CD include

"Banks of Marble" and "We Have Fed You All for a Thousand Years," but done with the beautiful harmonies that run through the album. The lyrics of their version of "Banks of Marble" are somewhere between the rather tame one sung by Pete Seeger and the more extreme one you may remember if you were at the General Assembly in Winnipeg.

Folk This appropriately opens "We Have Fed You All" with the preamble to the IWW constitution, not sung, but read with voices intertwining throughout. The song then begins, and like most of the pieces here, the harmonies remind us that not only is our labor the source of all value,

but the source of all beauty as well.

For these songs and the others – from "Birmingham Sunday," the terrible story of the four girls killed by the Klan in the church bombing in 1963, to "One More Parade," one of Phil Ochs' best anti-war songs – "Banks of Marble" ought to be part of your collection.

Folk music, from the simple chords of Woody Guthrie to the rich depth of Joan Baez to the memories and stories of our own Utah Phillips, is a reminder of the places we've been and those we've yet to go. Folk This! provides us a beautiful soundtrack to carry us down that long dusty road.

Long Live the 5th International!

BY CV, SEATTLE

I have come to the conviction that President-Select Bush is, in fact, a leftist. Serious! In all my 20-odd years of activism I have never known anyone to do as good a job at recruiting people to take to the streets as George W. Bush. Furthermore, he has managed to galvanize not just Americans, but people across the globe to unite in a common struggle against a commonly recognized enemy.

I think it is time we inaugurate the 5th International and proclaim the Dubya as its presiding leader.

Arguably, if this were the only criteria, then maybe Nixon should have also been regarded as a leading leftist. But Nixon was

hardly as adept as Bush. Bush has managed to bring masses out on the streets and to engage in political activity on a nearly unprecedented scale prior to acting! He's a genius!

The Shrub has not just managed to bring people to the streets, but to fight for their rights, fight against poverty, fight for union representation, fight for justice, equality.... And it doesn't stop here.

How many years have I spent trying to convince people about the non-objectivity of the press. But now, conversations will start by noting that such and such foreign news source stated this or that and that this was never reported here. People are realizing just how biased the news can be. People are finally beginning to question authority.

Recruiter threatens to kill Wobbly

A military recruiter told an IWW member he should be "shot in the head" as he was distributing anti-war flyers near a National Guard booth at the University of Massachusetts Boston. Campus police arrested an adjunct professor at the recruiters' request after he intervened. The Faculty Staff Union (NEA), which represents faculty, is demanding that administrators take steps to protect students and staff from future incidents.

The confrontation began when the recruiter began screaming at IWW member Tony Naro, who was passing out leaflets commemorating the 35th anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.

When the professor intervened in the dispute, a guardsman turned to them and said, "You should be shot in the head." Police then tackled the professor, arresting him as students shouted "Stop police brutality" and "Recruiters off our campus."

2 million in jail

The number of inmates in American prisons and jails now exceeds 2 million, the highest rate in history – and in the world. One in 12 Americans is now behind bars, as state and federal policies continue to drive up incarceration rates despite sharp drops in violent crime.

Drug offenses account for nearly 60 per-

cent of the federal prison population, and more than 20 percent of state prisoners. While the numbers jailed on drug charges has skyrocketed, hospital records and surveys indicate that drug use has not increased.

Violent crime is at its lowest level since 1974, when data was first collected nationally. However, longer sentences for both violent and nonviolent offenders have more than compensated for the smaller numbers.

Texas: 38 exonerated

Swisher County officials have agreed to pay \$250,000 to 38 people arrested in a 1999 drug sweep that jailed 12 percent of the town of Tulia's black residents – most on the word of an undercover officer who manufactured the evidence he presented. Thirteen of the 38 remain in jail pending a hearing before the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals.

Although prosecutors have agreed not to contest the request for new trials – and say they will not retry the cases if the motion is granted – the Court has historically been reluctant to overturn convictions even where there is clear evidence that they were illegally obtained. In this case, several defendants pled guilty under the threat of long jail sentences (the first defendant to go to trial received a 90-year sentence), even while continuing to maintain their innocence.



May Day Greetings!

from the

Workers Solidarity Alliance

Clearinghouse

339 Lafayette Street, Room 202

New York, New York 10012

Direct Action • Solidarity • Self Management

wsany@hotmail.com ~ www.workersolidarity.org

IWW & the Trade Unions...

continued from page 7

- Provide a more complete organising program for unionists who find that traditional trade union approaches are useless in the face of globalisation, state repression and the increasing casualisation of the workforce.

- As the workforce becomes more and more transitional, causal and insecure, only the flexible tactics (and structure) of the IWW can succeed.

- Trade unions rely on attachment to the state to operate, the IWW does not, it is a network of unionists who can operate with absolute independence.

- As the IWW grows, it is better able to resist state repression and to provide useful defence to fellow workers in times of need.

- Globalisation and government policies mean that trade union tactics will not work. You may get a good contract but your factory may still be shifted to Mexico.

- Direct action is required to win and maintain those wins. Even unionists in reasonably militant and democratic trade unions still must use direct action, and will get that (as well as active solidarity) from the IWW.

- Everyone wants a better standard of living for their children (and the generations to come). Trade union organising is about the here and now; the IWW is about the world we want to see, and the way to achieve it – and also the best structure at the moment to also win a bit more out of the boss.

Our goal as the IWW should not be one of competition with other unions. Despite their (often massive) flaws, they are usually much bigger and better resourced.

The classic mistake made by militant unionists is to try and change unions from within. This will never work as the unions are designed to be controlled from the top down, and replacing a few figureheads does not change this.

The other mistake that is made is trying to completely go it alone with a rival organisation. The IWW could promise the world to potential members but can we deliver?

We need to build the IWW step by step. Building dual power on the job helps workers to win against the boss, and also builds dual power inside their trade union – not to change it from within, but to get the most out of their membership and to allow organising to continue if the trade union does not provide assistance.

MAY DAY GREETINGS

from the Edmonton

General Membership Branch

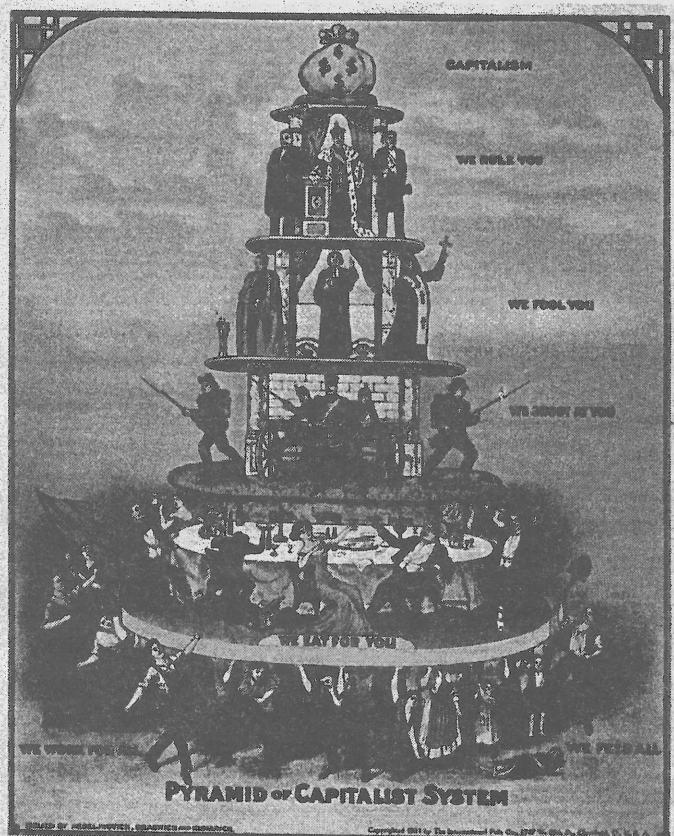
TIME FOR THE

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www.iww.org/campaigns

Books for Rebellious Workers

New Posters!



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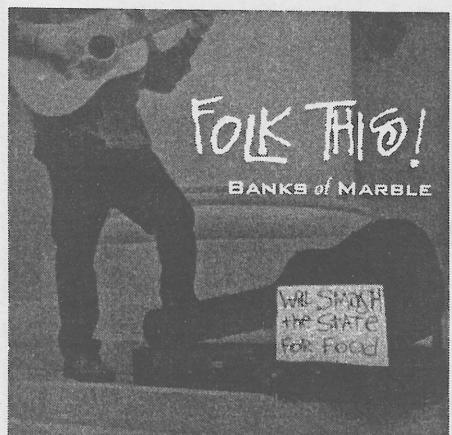
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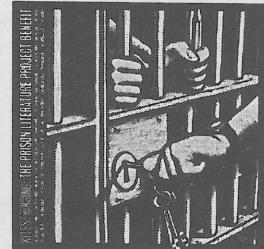
New Music



Folk This! Banks of Marble

see review on page 11

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tracks for this excellent collection created to benefit the Prison Literature Project in California, which sends out over 2,000 free books to prisoners every month. Contributors include Ward Churchill, Noam Chomsky, Chumbawamba, Propagandhi, The Weakerthans, and Tribe 8.

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Writings by Wobblies

Upon the Backs of Labor: Unruly Working Class Essays by Arthur J. Miller

A compilation of 18 essays by Arthur J. Miller, editor of *Bayou La Rose*; a miner, pipefitter, trucker and berry picker; and one of the most prolific writers of the present-day IWW. Themes include working class environmentalism, revolutionary unionism, and shorter work hours. Miller writes in the introduction, "If working people are to liberate themselves from the exploitation of the employing class, one of the things they must do is to relearn the art of self-expression. For to depend on others to completely speak for us workers, means to limit our needs to the interpretation of those that cannot truly understand the realities of our lives."

80 pages, \$8.00

Labor History

Strike! by Jeremy Brecher A history of American workers' struggle from a working-class viewpoint, arguing that class upsurges are based in everyday life and rank-and-file initiative. While this edition is somewhat less optimistic than the original, it still provides rich detail of workers' rebellions throughout American history, and abundant evidence for the proposition that workers are fully capable of making our own history, should we set our minds to the task. \$22.00

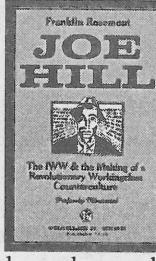
The CIO's Left-Led Unions Edited by Steven Rosswurm. In 1949 and 1950 the CIO expelled several left-wing unions. This collection explores the history of eleven of these unions, addressing the role of race and government policy in shaping unionism, the impact of anti-communism on race relations and working conditions, and the impact of the expulsions on the labor movement. Several of these provided an important counterpoint to more bureaucratic tendencies. \$10.00

May Day: A Short History of the International Workers' Holiday 1886-1986 by Philip S. Foner This is the story of May Day, a holiday born in the USA a hundred years ago and since 1890 celebrated by working people the world over. In this short history, Philip Foner clarifies the dramatic origins of labor's May Day and recounts many highlights of celebrations through the years. 183 pages, \$7.00

Joe Hill: The IWW and the Making of a Revolutionary Workingclass Counterculture by Franklin Rosemont.

"In Franklin Rosemont, Joe Hill has finally found a chronicler worthy of his revolutionary spirit, sense of humor, and poetic imagination. This is no ordinary biography. It is a journey into the Wobbly culture that made Joe Hill and the capitalist culture that killed him. But as Rosemont suggests in this remarkable book, Joe Hill never really dies. He will live in the minds of young rebels as long as his songs are sung, his ideas are circulated, and his political descendants keep fighting for a better day." — Robin D. G. Kelley

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The General Strike by Ralph Chaplin The classic text — a call for organization. \$2.00

Labor Education

The Power in Our Hands
by William Bigelow and Norman Diamond Curriculum materials for middle and high school teachers on the history of work and workers in the United States, including units on workers rights, exploitation, scientific management, the Homestead and Lawrence strikes, racial conflict and the labor movement, labor songs, and more. Includes lesson plans, hand-outs for students, and other resources. 184 pages, \$18.00

Organizing

The New Rank and File

by Staughton and Alice Lynd

With this inspiring collection of interviews with working class organizers from many facets of the international labor movement, the Lynds demonstrate the type of grassroots approach that we need if we are to build the strength to win against a global, wealthy and well-armed foe. Directed at two groups — rank-and-file workers and young people entering the labor movement — this book directly takes on the ideology of business unionism and offers hope and ideas for democratic, solidarity unionism. 262pp \$16.00

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Guatemalan teachers strike outlawed

BY PETER MOORE

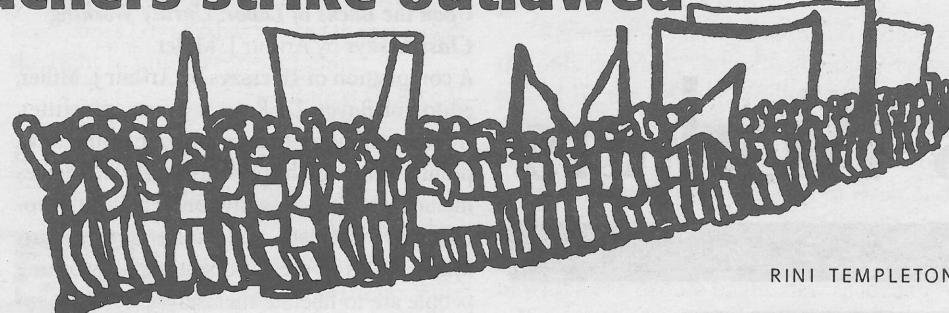
The Guatemalan government used a new back-to-work law to force more than 60,000 Guatemalan public school teachers to end their nine week national strike.

The teachers struck on January 20 to demand a salary increase, better working conditions and improvements to Guatemala's education system. They had formed a new national teachers assembly composed of teacher associations and unions across the country to advocate on their behalf. However, the government had stalled responding to their demands for a year.

The strikers received a one-time 200 quetzal payment for returning to work. The 5,000 teachers the government fired in February remain jobless and, because they are not classified as retired, lose access to their pension and benefits. A new teacher earns a monthly salary of 1,000 quetzales (\$200 CDN, \$136 USD), while a teacher with 30 years of experience would receive 6,000 quetzales (\$600 CDN, \$408 USD).

When the government did not respond to their demands, the teachers sought to create more pressure through national disruption. The teachers and their allies in the peasant farmer and labour movement blockaded key roads, occupied three airport terminals including the one in Guatemala City, customs offices on the borders with Mexico and El Salvador, and two ports.

The government escalated the tension by



RINI TEMPLETON

deploying the army on February 13 to protect government buildings.

The Ministry of Education suspended the teachers' salaries and threatened legal charges against 15,000 teachers. An opposition party initiative to end the crisis by meeting the strikers' demands failed when government representatives walked out of the national congress, breaking quorum. Then the government fired 5,000 teachers.

The teachers assembly had not foreseen that government resistance would be so stubborn, according to Roberto Miranda, an exiled Guatemalan teacher now living in Ottawa, Canada. He maintains contact with his father, also a teacher, and his former union. A former teachers' union leader, Miranda fled to Canada after surviving four assassination attempts in 1993.

Miranda said he believes the government of General Efraín Ríos Montt, infamous for his alleged direction of the military's "scorched earth" campaign which murdered thousands of rural and Mayan Guatemalans, took a tough line with the teachers in order

to build up his election campaign for the country's presidency in November 2003.

The teachers' decision, taken by a vote in the national assembly after consultation with the regional teacher associations, troubled Miranda.

"I can't explain it," he said, when asked why the teachers' union would settle for so little and leave 5,000 of their colleagues jobless. "Before, we would always keep the pressure on and not return to work until everyone returned to their jobs," he said.

One reason may be the risk of having public opinion turn against them if they defied the law. Another reason may be fear of harsher repression.

On March 4, the bound body of the 42-year-old brother of one of the strike leaders was found 120 miles southeast of Guatemala City. He sold beds for a living. No one claimed responsibility for the murder, but it evokes the raw memories of death squads targeting union, civil and other leaders during the war, which ended in 1996 with the signing of the peace accords.

Argentina: The town wins Zanon!

BY JAMIE, INDYMEDIA ARGENTINA

Across Argentina, workers have seized hundreds of factories, building an alternative economy as the capitalist one crumbles around them. At first, the regime tolerated these, unable to prevent workers from taking matters into their own hands. But today, the government seeks to return the self-managed factories to the bosses. On April 8 police attempted to evict workers from the Zanon ceramics factory, which has been occupied for over a year:

From the moment it became clear that the workers of Zanon were preparing to resist a possible eviction, people, families and organizations began to arrive at the factory to resist. Zanon does not simply represent worthwhile work for 300 families; it's also the realization of a dream of another way to understand the economy and social relations. The worker-run Zanon believes that it can use its productive potentials to guarantee food and dignity for 700 families.

The workers of Zanon no longer want to work for the enrichment of just one or a few: they want to continue to work to improve the lives of the whole community. On the day of the attempted evictions, people said 'No' to the employers' association, to the corruption of the judicial system which

serves those in power and never the people.

Hand in hand, people protected Zanon's doors. The fresh air of autumn, the clear blue skies, the music from guitars, and the smiles of everyone gathered there ensured that the hours passed quickly. Gradually it became clear that the receivers were not going to be able to take possession of the factory. Even when it was announced that they would arrive with police, the celebration continued unabated – people were unalarmed.

Eventually, the receivers arrived and were told that they could enter to take an inventory of the building, but not to take possession of it. The workers' assembly of Zanon had decided that it would in no way allow the planned eviction to take place. After some dialogue the receivers, stalled, went away. The town proclaimed its victory.

Prevailing today was not only Zanon and its workers, but the whole society that supported them – and indeed the dreams and fights of a different and very necessary world. The solidarity at Zanon today made it impossible for 'justice' to use coercive force to impose its will on the people. The massacre that would have had to have been carried out in order to take possession here would have only doubled the town's will. What happened in Padilia, in Sasetru, could not happen

here today because the town was united. It seems that we have written a page of history. I hope that when the page turns, it will reveal a happy ending.

The organizations and laborers who supported the plant left with a smile. It was a joy to have won against the employers' association and these new attempts at eviction, but we were waiting for the setting of the sun to seal this victory against judicial power.

It was then that Luis approached us. "To live the experience of Zanon from the outside is totally different to living it from the inside," he said. "There are people who, imagine, were accustomed to working in the old way for twenty years. There has been a lot of tension here since we found out about the evictions. To take charge of the preparations for resisting it has been to live with that tension. But the force of the companions gathered here is impressive..."

"Yesterday in an assembly one woman described her belief that the government is doing this as much to impact the families as the workers of Zanon. She affirmed her resolve not to allow the needs of her family to interfere in the struggle here. If it was necessary that her husband be killed for his job, she would prefer to die fighting against hunger than to give in. With tears in our eyes we all began to applaud. We were touched. Again, today, I leave with tears in my eyes."

"This may only be a first round, but it is a decisive one. There is no going back. Now there is a moment of calm, a moment in which to take breath. I am very pleased with the support we received; we had expected a strong turn-out, but this was well beyond our expectations. This was something we hadn't imagined."

Cuba jails union activist

Roberto Miranda, president of the Association of Independent Teachers and a long-time critic of the Castro regime, is one of an estimated 75 dissidents arrested in February.

State security forces also confiscated schoolbooks and other educational materials from Miranda's house in Havana, where he tutored students in an after-school program. Miranda was fired from his job as a junior high school teacher 12 years ago because of his political activities.

Strikers defiant at Candelaria mine

Workers at Chile's Candelaria copper mine, controlled by U.S.-based Phelps Dodge Corp., struck March 30. Some 550 workers are on strike, and seven have begun a hunger strike. Another 100 nonunion employees are scabbing.

Candelaria is an open-pit mine, concentrator plant and port facility which ships copper in concentrate to Japan and the U.S. Phelps Dodge has an 80 percent stake in the mine while Japan's Sumitomo conglomerate holds 20 percent.

"The company has not given any serious response to our demands and its latest offer was rejected unanimously by the union assembly," union leader Ivar Manzano told Reuters.

Workers are seeking a 6 percent real wage increase, and a fairer method for calculating bonuses linked to productivity. If Candelaria does not begin serious negotiations, workers are considering blocking mine access or occupying its installations.

Repression of Russian labor leader continues

BY CURTIS VAUGHAN

News out of Russia is rare these days. Most of what makes it to press relates to the situation in Chechnya. As we find happening in the U.S. today, where the government engages in open repression against a people, it will also result in domestic repression against progressive elements. One such person is Vladimir P. Vorobiev, who has been hounded by the political establishment for several years.

Vorobiev first gained world attention in 1998, when he organized a blockade of the Trans-Siberian railroad by miners. Since then he became a well-known labor leader in the Kuzbass region. In his home town of Anzhero-Sudensk, Vorobiev is now involved in opposition to factory closures. Last November two plants were closed in the city: a pharmaceutical plant which employed 1,000 workers and a glass plant with employed several 100 workers.

Repression against Vorobiev heated up after his return from the European Social Forum in Italy last year. This international visibility triggered a campaign of slander in the press (not only locally, but nationally as well). Since his return, he has been subjected to repeated interviews with the police, as well as threats against himself and his family.

Earlier this year, Vorobiev was invited to a meeting of the Turkish Workers' Party for the beginning of March. He was invited because the governor of Kuzbass, Tuleev, runs the commercial coal operations in this region. Kuzbass coal has been shipped to Turkey at cut-rate prices, leading to layoffs for Turkish miners. Turkish workers sought contact with the Russian workers' movement in order to put concerted pressure on their class enemy and not each other.

However, Vorobiev will probably not be allowed to go to Turkey. In February he was threatened with arrest as a criminal case was brought against him and another labor leader, Igor Kuznetsov, in an apparent response to plans to run for a seat on the regional council.

Korean unionist freed after 20 months

KCTU President Dan Byung Ho was released from jail in early April after 20 months' imprisonment. The Korean Confederation of Trade Unions issued a statement thanking the international labor movement for its solidarity efforts in Dan's behalf and vowed to continue struggles against neoliberal globalization and the ongoing U.S.-led attack on Iraq, in solidarity with workers of the world.

Action against G8

The Convergence of Anti-Authoritarian and Anti-Capitalist Struggles Against the G8 (CLAAACG8) calls for international actions to protest the June 1-3 G8 summit in Evian, France. The G8 is a gathering where the world's richest governments discuss common strategies for pursuing their interests.

Their call, "Against the lordships of the G8!", counterposes the world order of the rich to a world where there "exist relationships other than that of the market, of domination, alienation and exploitation."

Noting the logic of militarization that is pervading our societies, and the intensified attacks "on the poor, the exploited and against every form of resistance to the capitalist order," CLAAAC says only struggles based upon direct action and self-management can build a real opposition to the capitalist offensive. Check out the website for more info: <http://www.claaacg8.org/english/>

Sara Lee campaign

Chicago-based Sara Lee operates two Hanes clothing factories in Monclova, Mexico. Since workers began organizing for a safe workplace and a living wage, Sara Lee has announced plans to close these facilities.

Hanes has stopped all bus service to the outlying villages where many workers live, making it nearly impossible for these women to go to work. Mexican law requires companies that close factories to pay workers three months severance pay, but they do not have to pay workers who quit. This is a common trick used by transnational corporations that operate maquiladora factories in Mexico.

These factories have been consistently profitable over the more than ten years Sara Lee has operated them – part of what Sara Lee calls "one of the largest and most profitable apparel businesses in the world," with profits last year of \$676 million.